

## Innovation Grant

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Applicant	James Brownson
Applicant ID	APP-000434
Company Name	International Rescue Committee
Recipient Address	International Rescue Committee 7287 W. Franklin Road Boise, ID 83709
Email	james.brownson@rescue.org
Funding Requested	\$24,999.70
Status	Submitted
Funded	<input type="checkbox"/>

Application Title: International Rescue Committee Innovation

Review Notes:

February 23rd Grant Review Committee Notes

International Rescue Committee – Innovation Grant

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is applying for an innovation grant that will help start-up an industrial sewing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship group sponsor program. Apprentices will receive nationally recognized Industrial Sewing Technician credentials upon completion of the apprenticeship. The program will leverage IRC's connections with four key employers, training partners, and trainee referral sources to bridge the workforce and skills gap in the cloth manufacturing industry. The program will primarily benefit youth and adult job seekers. Individuals who may be eligible for WIOA Title I services as well as all interested and eligible individuals will be targeted for this program. IRC will actively recruit diverse participants, namely people of color, women, people with disabilities, and English Language Learners.

Discussion

- Supportive of the collaborative nature of this model. Both employers and public workforce programs are engaged.
- Employers are strong. There are others that could benefit as the program grows. There is an opportunity to replicate the program in other parts of the state.
- Commerce has had interest from companies outside the state who are interested in reshoring their industrial sewing jobs in Idaho if the workforce is available.

Motion from Mr. Reynolds to approve the grant, second from Senator Stennett. Motion carried.

## Contact Information

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**Question:** Lead entity legal name

International Rescue Committee, Inc.

**Question:** "Doing business as" entity name (if Applicable)

International Rescue Committee, Inc.

**Question:** Federal Tax ID Number

13-5660870

**Question:** Street address

7291 W. Franklin Road

**Question:** PO Box (If applicable)

Not Answered

**Question:** City

Boise

**Question:** State

ID

**Question:** Zip Code

83709

**Question:** Website

<https://www.rescue.org/united-states/boise-id>

**Question:** First name of person to be contacted about this application

James

**Question:** Last name

Brownson

**Question:** Job title

Manager of Development and Economic Wellbeing Programs

**Question:** Street address

7291 W. Franklin Road

**Question:** City

Boise

**Question:** State

ID

**Question:** Zip code

83709

**Question:** Email address

james.brownson@rescue.org

**Question:** Contact phone

208-921-9451

## Project Overview

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Innovation grants can fund projects that address local workforce development needs. Projects may provide skills training to individuals and/or assist individuals with connecting to careers.

**Question:** Please provide a brief overview/executive summary addressing what you're trying to accomplish with this project. (You are limited to 2000 characters for this section so please be concise.)

Manufacturers in the Treasure Valley have identified a skills gap in industrial sewing in addition to a significant shortage of applicants for the increasing number of positions being created in response to market demand. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Boise's Career Pathways Program has registered as an industrial sewing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship group sponsor with the Department of Labor and will leverage our connections with four key employers, training partners, and trainee referral sources to bridge this workforce and skills gap. In its first year, our program will connect 26 sewing technician apprentices with four manufacturers who will provide on-the-job training. All apprentices will receive nationally recognized Industrial Sewing Technician credentials upon completion of the apprenticeship. Additionally, employer partners' recent hires will also be invited to register as apprentices and engage in programming.

IRC is perfectly positioned to sponsor an industrial sewing technician apprenticeship and facilitate a pre-apprenticeship program thanks to our success with our Environmental Services Pre-apprenticeship Program in partnership with the College of Western Idaho. We have placed 26 participants into hospital sanitation apprenticeships and jobs since 2019, creating a vital pipeline before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our success in organizing trainings in healthcare, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and other fields is due to intentional relationship building, targeted recruitment, thorough intake processes, and vital supportive services offered during training and after job placement. While we have historically served English Language Learners, receipt of the Innovation grant would allow us to expand the scope of our career counseling services to encompass provision of career counseling to native-born

Americans needing assistance upskilling and achieving job stability in a moment of economic instability.

**Question:** If training is part of the project, how does it address specific employer-identified skills gaps in the community?

Employer partners – Voxn Clothing, Stitch Fabrication, and Sentry Products Group– have identified that job applicants for industrial sewing technician positions often have only home-sewing or no experience, and therefore struggle with the following skills gaps: limited knowledge of how to operate industrial sewing and pattern cutting machinery; limited experience working with fabrics common to industrial sewing and apparel manufacturing; limited experience with types of stitches beyond a straight stitch or embroidery; difficulty maintaining manufacturing-level speed and precision; and lack of familiarity with final finish processes. Soft skills of applicants are generally satisfactory. Our 144-hour pre-apprenticeship training program, which will take place at employer host sites during off-work hours, will assist participants in upskilling through training on industrial sewing equipment and the basics of manufacturing processes. Placement into an apprenticeship is vital for the continuation of skills gains since employer partners have identified that it takes at minimum six months for new employees to become competent in a company's sewing and production processes. Apprentice candidates will perform sewing tests and create sample products unique to their potential employers' product lines to showcase during their interview for apprenticeships.

**Question:** Workforce Development Training Funds are intended to supplement, but not supplant or compete with resources available through existing programs. Are there existing resources available to meet the employers' needs? How are those resources lacking?

Currently, there are no industrial sewing technician training programs or apprenticeships in the Treasure Valley to help employers meet emergent staffing needs or to help job seekers upskill through learning the basics of industrial sewing. Our pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship will provide a means for apprenticeship placement and achievement of a nationally recognized industrial sewing credential. There are, however, two existing local sewing and crafting training programs, Artisans for Hope and Sew Boise. While both programs provide crucial basic sewing skills instruction, they do not prepare individuals for industrial sewing work or offer a recognized industry credential. Neither program exposes trainees to industrial sewing machines and manufacturing processes or prepares them for placement into industrial sewing technician positions. Artisans for Hope trains beginner, intermediate, and advanced refugee and immigrant artisans on basic machine sewing, knitting, and jewelry making skills, U.S. measurements systems, and marketing of handcrafted items, while also delivering contextual English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. Their studio space and training program has been suspended since March 2020 due to COVID-19. Some artisans, primarily elderly individuals, have continued some sewing projects from home throughout the pandemic, focusing on mask production. Sew Boise is a for-profit business and sewing school offering eight sewing and design training tracks at a cost: tailoring, fashion, home, couture, accessory, and universal sewing trainings. It moved some of its programming online in December 2020.

**Question:** What employment opportunities does the project seek to fill?

The IRC's Industrial Sewing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship program will prepare at minimum 26 participants to fill the 35+ industrial sewing positions being created by our employer partners' expansion due to growing market demands. Employer partner companies anticipate the following number of openings in 2021 and a steady number of openings in 2022 and beyond:

Voxn Clothing: 15-20 positions

Sentry Products Group: 4 positions  
Stitch Fabrication: 6-10 positions

**Question:** How will the project accelerate the pathway to a career for individuals being trained.

The project will help individuals with basic, non-industrial sewing skills or no sewing exposure bridge skills gaps and develop in-demand industry skills, leverage opportunities to gain familiarity with employer equipment and manufacturing processes and advance in their career pathway. Wrap-around supportive services and case management provided by IRC will ensure successful completion of apprenticeship training and help address participants' barriers to career advancement, namely, limited education, limited transportation, lack of childcare, and low literacy and English language skills.

**Question:** How will the project change and/or enhance the current landscape of Idaho's talent pipeline/development efforts.

Soft goods manufacturing companies in Idaho, and especially the Treasure Valley, are expanding their workforces to keep up with increasing demand for US-made products and to shorten lead times. This expansion was well underway before 2020 due to local economic growth but has been further accelerated by COVID-19 global market changes. IRC's industrial sewing employer partners have pinpointed challenges with the available labor force's skills gaps evident in recruitment and during initial training periods. Currently, there are no industrial sewing technician training programs or apprenticeships in the state. Four employer partners in need of industrial sewing technicians have expressed significant interest in IRC's role as an apprenticeship group sponsor and pre-apprenticeship provider since it will directly address the skills gaps and limited pool of candidates.

Specifically, this project will enhance Idaho's talent pipeline by offering earn and learn opportunities at both the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship level. Participants who qualify for any available WIOA work experience funds, particularly youth ages 18-24, could also receive wages during the pre-apprenticeship training period through the Department of Labor. If refugee participants who are unemployed at the start of the pre-apprenticeship program do not qualify for WIOA work experience funds, they could receive pay at the rate of Idaho's minimum wage through IRC's partnership with Global Talent Idaho on a federal Health and Human Services refugee career pathways grant. This grant provides direct financial assistance to refugees to help them overcome financial barriers that keep them from pursuing training. This direct financial assistance would be available to refugee participants if they are not eligible for WIOA funding.

The IRC's industrial sewing technician pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship program will create a pipeline of 26 industrial sewing technician apprentices who obtain contextualized skills training and are prepared for entry into apprenticeship. In general, apprentices stay with companies longer than standard employees due to their investment in training, benefiting employers through reduction in staff turnover and providing employees with much needed job security. IRC would ensure program retention, seeing apprentices through to the transition to journey workers; IRC Career Pathways participants have an 80% program completion rate in large part thanks to our wrap-around supportive services. Additionally, our apprenticeship initiative complements other state apprenticeship initiatives to meet skilled labor shortages and combat unemployment. Since industrial sewing technician positions require skill-based training rather than academic education, this apprenticeship track will enable diverse individuals with learning disabilities, individuals with interrupted secondary education, and English language learners to enter a non-traditional skilled trades career path. Since the position is seated and

relatively low impact, it will also enable individuals with physical disabilities making it difficult for them to stand to have full-time, gainful employment. Individuals with certain medical issues that keep them among the long-term unemployed may also benefit.

**Question:** Who will provide the training and/or implement the project?

IRC Career Pathways staff and volunteers will implement and supervise outreach, intake, pre-apprenticeship training delivery, and apprenticeship placement and completion. Employer hosts and industrial sewing journey workers will provide day-to-day on-the-job training, supervision, and mentorship of apprentices. Employers, volunteer sewing instructors, and current industrial sewing technicians will guest present during the pre-apprenticeship program.

**Question:** Where will the training be provided/project be implemented?

The pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training will be held at the worksites of employer hosts, where there is access to some industrial sewing equipment, ergonomic working conditions, supervision of trainers/journey workers, and COVID-19-responsive manufacturing workplace safety training and protocols. The first two cohorts will be limited to five participants per cohort, while the following cohorts will ideally have seven or more participants each. The training will be 2,000 hours for time-based apprentices and 1,000 hours for competency-based apprentices who will be required to have prior industrial sewing work experience, whether international or domestic. IRC anticipates five to ten individuals will skip pre-apprenticeship programming and enroll directly in competency-based apprenticeships. So far, IRC has already coordinated three competency-based industrial sewing apprenticeships. The 144-hour pre-apprenticeship training for more entry-level participants will be completed prior to apprenticeship placement and will include resume workshops and mock interview events. These events will be held in the International Rescue Committee in Boise's classroom or remotely via Zoom, dependent upon what COVID-19 circumstances and safety protocols allow.

**Question:** Who will benefit from this project, (Examples - adult job seekers, high school seniors, current employees)?

The project will primarily benefit youth and adult job seekers. Our program will target individuals typically eligible for WIOA Title I services, especially individuals with interrupted secondary education and no postsecondary skills training, though the program will be open to all interested and eligible individuals. We will actively recruit diverse participants, namely people of color, women, people with disabilities, and English Language Learners, all of whom are typically underserved by apprenticeship programs.

**Question:** List any prerequisites for individuals interested in participating in the project.

Participants must have long-term interest in becoming a journey worker industrial sewing technician, demonstrated by their desire to stay within the career path for greater than five years. They must score at least 70% on an IRC-developed career compatibility assessment. There will not be a requirement to possess a high school diploma, but all apprentice candidates will be required to perform a sewing skills test on an industrial sewing machine, for which pre-apprenticeship participants will be prepared. Candidates must have availability to engage in pre-apprenticeship programming and a year-long time-based apprenticeship program or alternatively a six-month competency-based apprenticeship program. Candidates will sign an agreement at the onset of participation to complete the apprenticeship programming unless extenuating circumstances arise. Target participants will meet WIOA Title I eligibility

requirements, including low-income individuals, individuals on public assistance, individuals who lack basic skills, individuals with disabilities.

**Question:** How will participants be selected? What are the agreed-upon screening processes, if any?

After outreach and recruitment efforts produce a competitive candidate pool, apprentice candidates will meet with an IRC Career Pathways Program coach for program orientation. If candidates choose to complete the screening process for the pre-apprenticeship program or direct entry into apprenticeship programming, they will complete and must score at least 70% on an IRC-developed career compatibility assessment, which will assess skills and interests, ability to perform the physical functions of the job, basic math skills for measuring, and English comprehension of a CASAS level 3 or higher. Employer partners have approved these screening processes. All participants that meet WIOA Title I eligibility requirements will go through Department of Labor WIOA program orientation and screening processes at the same time as apprenticeship screening processes to become registered for on-the-job training. Pre-apprenticeship program participation will be required for individuals with limited sewing experience. Individuals who have six months of industrial sewing work experience can skip pre-apprenticeship programming and pass directly to apprenticeship programming. Industrial sewing apprentices will be selected by the employers through regular interview and hiring processes, including a sewing skills test.

**Question:** What outreach efforts will the team use to encourage under-served populations to participate in the project?

Our close partnerships with a wide network of community and system partners will provide channels for referral of a wide range of participants, but especially participants that meet WIOA Title I eligibility requirements. These partners include: career technical, basic skills, and English as a Second Language education providers; behavioral and mental health agencies; youth mentoring programs; community and religious organizations; public service providers; and state workforce systems, such as the Department of Labor; and Department of Health and Welfare's SNAP Education and Training Program and its contactor, Maximus. Since the IRC Career Pathways Program serves new Americans as they pursue careers in Idaho, we are uniquely positioned to recruit apprentice candidates from among our program participants and perform outreach to hundreds more through our immigration services, economic empowerment programs, and youth programs. We are practiced in community outreach and engagement and will include recruitment announcements for our industrial sewing apprenticeship program in our quarterly newsletter as well as highlighting it through community engagement events, work site tour events, and program orientation events.

**Question:** Please provide a detailed description of why funding is needed for this project?

WDTF's innovation funding is vital to establishing and delivering the industrial sewing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship program. Funding in the amount of \$25,000 is needed to support the purchase of industrial sewing training equipment, materials, and classroom supplies; staff time for program development, including recruitment, and program delivery, program supervision, and financial support and oversight; and finally, staff travel to and from training and employer worksites. To provide program participants with adequate hands-on training experience and familiarity with industrial sewing machines, IRC will need to purchase four industrial sewing machines and sufficient materials, such as needles, thread, fabric, patterns, measuring tapes, scissors, and pins for each pre-apprentice program participant's creation of portfolios. Classroom supplies will also be needed to ensure each participant has all training



handouts, math worksheets, etc. Funding for staff time will support adaptation and delivery of training curricula, participant and employer recruitment and pairing, and reporting on apprentice progress.

Stitch Fabrication's close partnership will enable the IRC to forgo paying rent costs for a studio training space through their generous donation of their worksite as the pre-apprenticeship training program site. Their donation of four additional industrial sewing machines for use in the pre-apprenticeship program will allow the program to serve at minimum seven students per cohort. Stitch Fabrication and Sentry will also allow IRC to use their industrial pattern equipment as part of the pre-apprenticeship program's exposure to industrial equipment. All employers will donate some fabric and patterns to enable pre-apprenticeship participants to produce a portfolio of products to showcase in interviews for apprenticeships, additional materials will be purchased with Innovation grant funds. All employer partners will provide apprentices with sewing materials and mentorship throughout their apprenticeships.

**Question:** Will participants be charged to participate in this project?

No

## Community-Based Team

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Innovation Grants require participation from a community-based team with representation and support from business, education and other community partners as an ideal partnership.

### [Letter of Intent](#)

**Question:** Please describe how the community-based team partners are involved in the project.

Led by IRC in Boise's Career Pathways Program, the community-based team will comprise three employer partners and the state workforce system. Employer partners – Voxn Clothing, Sentry Products Group, and Stitch Fabrication – will be apprentice employer host sites. IRC will be the apprenticeship group sponsor and will recruit and help place apprentices. These employer partners will collaborate with the IRC to provide industry insight that informs the training curriculum of IRC's Industrial Sewing Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Program. Stitch Fabrication will provide their worksite and donate four sewing industrial machines to assist IRC staff and volunteer delivery of the industrial sewing pre-apprenticeship program in off-work hours. All employer partners will share information about their job openings, pay rates, employee benefits, manufacturing processes, and job expectations with pre-apprenticeship program participants as guest presenters when possible. Employers will select apprentices for industrial sewing apprenticeships through their regular interview processes.

State workforce system partners – Idaho Department of Labor and Idaho Department of Health and Welfare SNAP Education and Training Fund – will also provide program referrals. In addition to providing referrals, the Idaho Department of Labor's WIOA adult and youth program staff enroll IRC-referred apprentice candidates in on-the-job training programming and provide occasional supportive services when funding is available. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare SNAP Education and Training (SNAP E+T) Fund and Maximus will provide referrals as

well as reimburse IRC for program enrollees who receive SNAP benefits through our SNAP 50/50 partnership. They may also reimburse IRC for direct program participant direct costs, such as, bus and transportation costs, work clothing, etc.

**Question:** Number of employer partners involved in this project?

3.00

**Question:** Number of non-employer partners involved in this project?

2.00

**Question:** Please upload completed Letter of Intent from each community-based partner. A link to the Letter of Intent is provided above.

[IRC's Innovation Grant Maximus 021121.pdf](#) (2/12/2021 8:54 AM)

[Voxn Letter of Intent Innovation Grant.pdf](#) (2/2/2021 11:54 AM)

[Stitch Fab Innovation Grant Community-Based Team Letter of Intent.pdf](#) (2/2/2021 11:53 AM)

[Sentry Innovation Grant Community-Based Team Letter of Intent \(1\).pdf](#) (2/2/2021 11:53 AM)

[IDOL Innovation Grant Community-Based Team Letter of Intent signed.pdf](#) (2/2/2021 11:53 AM)

## Project Sustainability

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**Question:** If the community has plans to sustain the project beyond the life of a Workforce Development Innovation Grant, please share. (Not a requirement to receive grant funds.)

IRC in Boise's Career Pathways Program has a strong track record of obtaining funding. Career Pathways was started in 2017 through joint receipt of a federal grant with Idaho Office for Refugees from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement. Career Pathways has since obtained grants from Crankstart Foundation, Arconic Foundation, Wells Fargo, and Mariam Wes Assefa Fund in addition to an Office of Refugee Resettlement subaward from Global Talent Idaho. This diversity of funding sources has enabled training program expansion and the addition of new staff. Our partnership with the Department of Health and Welfare's SNAP Employment and Training Program continues to provide reimbursement of costs for SNAP eligible clients. Receipt of the Innovation Grant would allow us to expand the scope of our services to include an industrial sewing pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship program. We anticipate a continuing need for industrial sewing apprenticeships in the Treasure Valley and IRC Boise will seek additional funding to continue and expand this program beyond the life of the Innovation Grant.

## Project Schedule

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Please provide anticipated numbers/methods to assess the effectiveness of the proposed project.

[Project Schedule Form](#)

**Question:** Please provide an anticipated project start date.

4/1/2021

**Question:** How many training sessions/events will be held during the 12 months of the grant?

3 pre-apprenticeship cohorts will be held between April 2021 and April 2022.

1 competency-based apprenticeship cohort will complete six-month apprenticeships between September 2021 and March 2022.

1 time-based apprenticeship cohort will complete year-long apprenticeships by July 2022.

2 additional time-based apprenticeship cohorts will complete year long-apprenticeships outside the grant reporting period by October 2022 and April 2023, respectively.

**Question:** Please download and complete the project schedule form. The completed form can be uploaded here. To download the form click on the link provided above.

[Innovation Grant Project Schedule.xlsx](#) (2/2/2021 12:03 PM)

## Project Outcomes

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**Question:** How will employer satisfaction be measured?

Employer satisfaction will be measured by survey of employer's feedback on pre-apprenticeship candidate pool, two-week apprenticeship post-placement check-in, six-month employer satisfaction survey, and apprenticeship completion and employee performance feedback survey.

**Question:** How will participant satisfaction be measured?

Participant satisfaction will be measured by pre-apprenticeship program evaluation survey, two-week apprenticeship post-placement check-in, six-month apprenticeship satisfaction survey, and apprenticeship completion and job satisfaction survey.

**Question:** Total number of individuals served by this project?

26.00

**Question:** Number of individuals receiving credential(s)?

26.00

**Question:** Number of individuals already employed who will receive training?

0.00

**Question:** Anticipated wage gain for individuals already employed? If applicable.

3.00

**Question:** Anticipated starting hourly wage for individuals entering employment? If applicable.

12.00

**Question:** What additional metrics do you propose to gather to measure the success of the project?

Number of individuals trained and receiving credentials.

Apprentice trainee and employer satisfaction.

Number of training hours provided.

Participant wage gain rates from pre-apprenticeship enrollment to apprenticeship completion.

Rates of reduction in employer's time to fill positions.

Levels of increased in diversity of workforce.

Rates of reduction in turnover.

Participant demographic information.

## Budget

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The application must provide a detailed explanation of how grant resources will be used to directly support the identified skills training. Provide the line item budget amount and detailed narrative for each item listed below to delineate how Innovation Grant resources will be used. Each line item's narrative should clearly describe how the line item amount was determined, as well as the necessity of the line item to develop/deliver the project.

### [Budget Sheet](#)

**Question:** Why do you think WDTF is a good source of funding for this project?

The WDTF is the ideal funding source to support IRC's registered industrial sewing apprenticeship project. Currently, IRC's training and career counseling services have funding that is limited to supporting staff time and paying for participant training direct costs. While we historically have leveraged community partner's donated training equipment and time of educational instructors, this support to deliver our apprenticeship program is not available at this time. Innovation grant funding will enable IRC to pay for the basic industrial sewing training equipment needed and delivery of the pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship program. It will enable us to expand the scope of our training pathways to apprenticeship work and open our training and career counseling to native-born Americans. Additionally, the project is being developed primarily to meet industrial sewing employers' immediate and continuing needs for skilled employees and to provide sought-after career development opportunities to Idahoans

with high barriers to employment that are priority populations under WIOA. Further, WDTF funding will showcase the State's support of non-traditional apprenticeship programs and pre-apprenticeship programs in a time of expansion of apprenticeships across the state. IRC's provision of program and outcome data on this early pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship project could be highly informative to future apprenticeship projects in the State.

**Question:** How else have you sought to fund this project?

Our program applied for and received a grant of \$12,000 to support our employer development and sponsor registration work. We have also applied for funding from a private donor to support our existing pathways and training programs; however, this donation would likely not provide the targeted support needed for the sewing technician apprenticeship program's initial set-up costs and staffing.

**Question:** Please download the attached budget. A link to the budget is provided above. Once completed, upload budget here.

[Innovation Grant Budget Narrative and Expenditures - Updated 3-20\\_FINAL.xlsx](#) (2/12/2021 12:36 PM)

## Organizational and Fiscal Capacity

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**Question:** Provide the accounting structure, job titles and qualifications of staff responsible for fiscal actions.

Rebecca Wilkey

IRC Senior Economic Wellbeing Programs Coordinator

Rebecca Wilkey has 4 years of experience in career counseling and workforce training and development and has worked for non-profit, private education, and state workforce agencies to develop training programs and employment solutions. In her current capacity, she oversees the work of IRC Boise's Economic Wellbeing Programs, including Spark, Financial Capability, Career Programs, and other unit-based projects and initiatives. Prior to assuming the role of Senior Economic Wellbeing Programs Coordinator, Rebecca served as a Career Pathways Coordinator and Employment Specialist for IRC in Boise office.

Julianne Donnelly Tzul

IRC Executive Director

Julianne Donnelly Tzul received a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center in 2004. Before joining the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Boise in 2010, she worked for Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., and Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc. At the IRC in Boise, Julianne has deepened IRC's services to refugees and the funding to make them possible in an external environment when many other refugee service providers are shrinking.

Andrew Pena

IRC Finance Manager

Andrew Pena holds a Bachelor and Master of Business Administration and has nearly 30 years of business experience in operations, financial statements preparation, strategic planning, profit

improvement analysis, capital budgeting, cash management analysis, and tax reporting. He has led the IRC in Boise's finance unit for the last five years.

**Question:** Please provide a short summary outlining your organizations capacity to complete this project.

IRC in Boise's Career Pathways Program has successfully piloted an Environmental Services Pre-apprenticeship Program in collaboration with St. Alphonsus, College of Western Idaho, and the Department of Labor, and placed 26 trainees in apprenticeships and jobs in local hospital systems. We have performed outreach to and assisted local businesses in taking initial steps to sponsor successful skilled trade apprenticeship and connected them with refugee apprentices, who we assisted in navigating WIOA youth and adult program enrollment. We have established six other career training programs in collaboration with various business, education, and funding partners. We have provided career counseling to 168 program participants and assisted over 80% in enrolling in and completing training programs, apprenticeships, and certification programs.

The IRC network has career pathway programs in 25 communities across the U.S. Our local program draws on a wealth of evidence-based program models that support diverse, low-income communities with significant barriers to develop in-demand skills and move into middle skill jobs. IRC is proud of its strategic collaborations with more than 1,000 employers each year, including Amazon, Marriott, Walmart, Swift Transportation, Tyson, some of the nation's largest hospital systems, and many others. Our workforce development programming receives leverages technical assistance from our Director of Economic Empowerment, Erica Bouris, Ph.D. Erica brings a particular focus on workforce programming, including programming for youth and adults, career pathway programs, innovative models of vocational ESL, and strategies to effectively serve adults with basic skills deficiencies. In her work, Erica is also leading IRC's implementation of integrated economic empowerment services that includes evidence-based financial coaching, access to appropriate financial products through IRC's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). Erica has provided training, capacity building, and technical assistance to stakeholders at the federal, state and local level, including the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, California Employment Development Department, the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the State Department, state and local TANF stakeholders, California State University, Migration Policy Institute, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, Workforce Matters, Local Initiative Support Corporation, the States of California, New Jersey, Montana, Kansas, Texas, and many others. Her expertise is particularly sought out by state and local systems that are working to more effectively serve diverse, low-income populations through evidence-based, integrated services, and she brings deep knowledge of WIOA and TANF programming in particular.

Erica currently serves on the Skills for California Leadership Council, hosted by the National Skills Coalition, is co-chair on the board of Workforce Ventures (a non-profit focused on expanding the use of ISAs in public workforce systems), and serves on the board of the San Diego YMCA. She holds a Ph.D. in International Studies (University of Denver) and is the author of several reports including Low-Income Families and COVID-19: Financial Lives Rife with Volatility Become Even More So, (2020), IRC and CEO Credit Outcomes Study (2020), Building America's New Workforce (2019), Skill, Career, and Wage Mobility Among Refugees (2018), and Financial Capability for New Americans (2016) as well as the book, Complex Political Victims, Kumarian Press (2007).

**Question:** Upon request, the lead organization may be asked to provide a statement from the entity's independent auditing firm regarding the entity's most recent fiscal audit to include a

statement of any audit findings. Is an audit available?

Yes

No

## Tracking and Reporting

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Innovation Grant funds must be expended within a one-year time period. Quarterly tracking and reporting of individuals participating in the project will be required. Individual names, start and end dates, and outcome data must be collected and reported.

**Question:** Entity responsible for tracking and reporting.

International Rescue Committee

**Question:** Contact Person First Name

Rebecca

**Question:** Contact Person Last Name

Brownson

**Question:** Job Title

Sr Economic Wellbeing Program Coordinator

**Question:** Contact Phone

208-391-3177

**Question:** Email Address

rebecca.wilkey@rescue.org

**Question:** Street Address

7287 W. Franklin Road

**Question:** City

Boise

**Question:** State

ID

**Question:** Zip Code

83709

## Terms and Conditions

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[Terms and Conditions](#)

**Question:** I certify I have read the terms and conditions governing the Workforce Development Training Fund grant and agree to comply if awarded a training grant. Click on the link above to view a copy of the terms and conditions.

Yes

No