

## Industry Sector Grant

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Applicant	Therese Borgerding
Applicant ID	APP-000421
Company Name	Idaho Rural Water Association
Recipient Address	Idaho Rural Water Association 6395 W Gowen Road Boise, ID 83709
Email	tborgerding@idahoruralwater.com
Funding Requested	\$499,675.00
Status	Submitted
Funded	<input type="checkbox"/>

Application Title: Idaho Rural Water Association

Description:

Idaho Rural Water Association Industry Sector Grant

Review Notes:

Grant Review Discussion from October 27, 2020

IRWA – Industry Sector Grant

Idaho Rural Water Association is requesting \$499,675.00. This project provides opportunities for incumbent workers and those interested in entering the Drinking Water and Wastewater industry. IRWA offers an Apprenticeship program for Class I or Class II operator's license and continuing education for incumbent workers throughout the state. There are 20 training/certification activities offered by the IRWA. The IRWA has cited in their application that many of the trainings offered are required by state and federal law or they are required as part of as part of the registered apprenticeship program. The grant monies will go towards expanded equipment (Clevertouch Screen & Mobile Cart, two cameras in training room & warehouse, and microphones) to be housed in the Boise training center allowing for virtual delivery of hands-on and classroom training. This grant will also help support a full-time instructor, mentor wage reimbursement, tuition scholarships, study materials, travel expenses (as needed), and some loaner laptops. Expanded technology will allow IRWA to provide a more robust schedule of classes where participation is not limited by locale.

WDTF Request: \$499,675

Is the measure of success the fact that they are able to sit for exam sooner or become qualified sooner or does this program help to get actual certifications?

- Both. Individuals in the apprenticeship programs are able to meet the requirements for licensing at a faster pace than non-apprentices. For individual who already hold licenses, they need continuing education to keep their licenses.
- Prior to COVID this was not offered virtually. They anticipated people from around the state to come in person to their new facility to take the training. It can also be difficult for those in rural areas to cover travel costs. This is opening the opportunity for anyone to access the training from anywhere in Idaho.
- The industry is very regulated when it comes to licensing. There are clear education and certification requirements.

It is noteworthy that they have 112 employers in Idaho enrolling 175 employees in the training program.

This application is asking us to pay for equipment that will allow them to convert the training to virtual/remote instead of developing curriculum. Is there any CARES Funding for this?

- We do not know if IRWA has explored that or not. We do not have a CARES Funding appropriation to provide them CARES funding. A new proposal would have to go before CFAC.

They are the first industry association in the state to stand up their own apprenticeship program and be the sponsor of the program. They have played a leadership role in apprenticeships. The level of commitment from industry partners has been phenomenal.

Motion by Mr. Maloney to recommend approval of the IRWA Industry Sector Grant in the full amount of \$499,675. Second by Mr. Cox. Motion carried.

## Company Information

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**Question:** Business entity name

Idaho Rural Water Association

**Question:** "Doing business as" entity name

Idaho Rural Water Association

**Question:** Federal Tax ID Number

82-0416513

**Question:** Street address

6395 W Gowen Road

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

n/a

**Question:** City

Boise

**Question:** State

ID

**Question:** Zip code

83709

**Question:** Business website

[www.idahoruralwater.com](http://www.idahoruralwater.com)

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

Kelsie

**Question:** Last name

Cole

**Question:** Job title

Apprenticeship Coordinator

**Question:** Street address

6395 W Gowen Road

**Question:** City

Boise

**Question:** State

ID

**Question:** Zip Code

83709

**Question:** Email address

kcole@idahoruralwater.com

**Question:** Contact phone

208-407-4418

## Consortium

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The applicant must be an employer or educational entity representing a consortium of at least three employer partners with a similar occupational training need. All members of the consortium will be required to complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A link to the grant MOU is provided below. Please upload all completed and signed MOU's by the consortium to this section of the application.

### [Employer Partner MOU](#)

**Question:** Please describe how employer partners are involved in the project and how they will engage with trainees who receive training.

Employer partners will assist in the project by offering input about curriculum development, its delivery, and industry needs and priorities. Partners will encourage their employees to participate in the trainings provided by IRWA, support apprentices in their required classroom instruction, and provide the proper space and equipment for apprentices and employees to participate in the virtual trainings when applicable. Employer partners are key to this project as they provide the primary on-the-job training hours for the apprentice. A seasoned drinking water/wastewater system operations specialist serves as the mentor and trainer locally. Employer partners have two types of trainees: 1) Licensed drinking water and wastewater operators (otherwise referred to as operations specialist for the purposes of this grant) that continue to enhance their knowledge through continuing education and 2) apprentices or other individuals new to the industry that may pursue completion of our registered apprenticeship program or other learning path to obtain their drinking water and/or wastewater license(s).

**Question:** Do each of the industry partners pay at least \$12 per hour

Yes

No

**Question:** Please upload completed MOU here.

[City of Buhl-Summary Sheet.pdf](#) (10/19/2020 12:34 PM)  
[American Falls - benefits book for 2020.pdf](#) (10/16/2020 11:47 AM)  
[Standard Apprenticeship Standards IRWA Version 2.pdf](#) (10/9/2020 7:54 AM)  
[MOU Smeltonville.pdf](#) (10/9/2020 7:51 AM)  
[MOU Buhl.docx](#) (10/9/2020 7:50 AM)  
[MOU American Falls.pdf](#) (10/9/2020 7:49 AM)

## Project Overview

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**Question:** Please provide a brief overview/executive summary of the training need(s), current/projected skills gaps, and what you're trying to accomplish with this project. (You are limited to 2000 characters for this section so please be concise.)

IRWA is the primary source of training for Drinking Water and Wastewater Operators throughout Idaho. Regulatory standards, evolving technology and industry best practices require operators to remain current on their licensing and continuing education to provide safe drinking water and waste management for their communities in a cost-effective manner. Our membership and industry partners are statewide, which provides challenges in offering regular in-class training without the burden of time and travel costs.

IRWA continues to develop a strong Apprenticeship Program preparing new operators for roles requiring a broad range of knowledge and skills. One of the key challenges of employers seeking to fill an Operator Specialist position for their utility is the lack of qualified candidates. In 2016, the Idaho Department of Labor determined 33% of Idaho's work force for this industry was 55 or older; equivalent to over 330 persons potentially leaving the work force over the next 10 years. The study found Idaho had only 80 licensed operators who are under the age of 35. Our greatest skills-gap for this industry is trained and experienced water and wastewater operators. IRWA is applying for funding to help employers train apprentices and existing employees, especially those in rural Idaho. Grant monies will go towards expanded equipment (Clevertouch Screen & Mobile Cart, two cameras in training room & warehouse, and microphones) to be housed in the Boise training center allowing for virtual delivery of hands-on and classroom training. This grant will also help support a full-time instructor, mentor wage reimbursement, tuition scholarships, study materials, travel expenses (as needed), and some loaner laptops. Expanded technology will allow IRWA to provide a more robust schedule of classes where participation is not limited by locale. Additional instructors will come from the IRWA team, as well as state and regional industry experts.

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

At present, an aspiring employee with a high school diploma or equivalent, who has been working at a drinking water or wastewater utility system may test for their Class I license after one year of acceptable relevant on-site operating experience. Depending on previous education and experience some employees pass the examination more easily than others. There are

several levels of industry required licensure ranging from a very small, Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV with later being the highest and most complex level of licensure. Licensure requirements are determined by Idaho Department of Environmental Quality based on the size and complexity of the utility system. Depending on the required level of licensure may take many years to gain the knowledge and experience to pass the examination and obtain the required field experience to earn a license. For many communities, the cost of an appropriately licensed drinking water or wastewater operator is a significant financial challenge.

This project provides opportunities for those interested in a rewarding career path in the Drinking Water and Wastewater industry to be more fully prepared and well-rounded as they step into an Operations Specialist role. The Apprenticeship curriculum offers a robust and broad knowledge base for the learner, not only to prepare them to successfully pass their initial Class I or Class II operator's license, but to offer a more in-depth understanding of the industry including:

environmental standards and regulations, ongoing technology updates, and a high commitment to safety in all operations. Opportunities for apprentices to engage with industry experts in the classroom will elevate the knowledge base the new operations specialist brings to their work, how they communicate with their community stakeholders, and the professionalism they bring to their role. The option to join a cohort, or "learning group" and participate virtually increases our ability to reach out and support the many rural communities that are far and wide in Idaho who would like to bring an apprentice onboard. Funding would also help cover travel costs for twice a year full day trainings and field trips to neighboring drinking water and wastewater utility systems so new operators have a broader understanding of various types and levels of drinking water/wastewater systems beyond the one they are presently working in, thereby enhancing their perspective and preparedness for working in the industry.

For many of Idaho's small utility systems and communities, access to training for existing employees is limited. Most of these employees have multiple job responsibilities (i.e. operating drinking water system, maintenance of city parks, roads, and cemeteries, etc.) and experience travel constraints. These individuals with broad job responsibilities need access to both basic and more advanced industry information in the most economical fashion possible. Multiple training options such as in-person class, virtual or the occasional area workshop will better serve them. Fortunately, Idahoans have experienced expanded Internet access for the smallest of communities. Presently operators can access some internet platform (Zoom, Teams, WebEx) to participate in training, either using city hall resources, computers in their own office/shop, and

their smartphones. The added option of obtaining training virtually will ease the burden of travel costs on cities with strained financial budgets.

**Question:** What specific skills training will be provided? Include any planned enhancements that will be made to current training.

For the apprentice, a large part of the skills training takes place in the field, with on-the-job training hours with their mentor. The registered apprenticeship requires specific hours be completed in five (5) areas of skill and knowledge:

1. Tools, Equipment and Workplace Safety
2. Vehicles and Heavy Equipment
3. System Operations and Maintenance
4. Quality Controls
5. Logistics, Reports and Supervision.

(See attached: Apprenticeship Standards, Appendix A1 and A2)

Classroom content will supplement and enhance the skills and knowledge acquired in the field. In addition to regularly scheduled virtual training sessions, the new standardized apprenticeship curriculum will also include hosting periodic full day trainings for cohorts. (These are scheduled to be twice a year at the IRWA Boise Training Center in Boise and will be geared for more hands-on training learning about various equipment, important maintenance including important calibration adjustments and priority safety practices. Our plan for the standardized curriculum beginning in January 2021 will be for instructors to regularly assign homework that connects classroom content and discussion with workplace hands-on skills practice and testing of these newly gained concepts and principles.

It is not always cost effective to schedule expert industry trainers for several sessions at different locations throughout the state to serve our operators and their schedules. With purchased technology hardware for the training center, new and seasoned operators can receive instruction and view demonstrations both onsite, as well as virtually. This offers individuals, regardless of their location in the state, access to up-to-date information, and best practices on important topics for their industry. Providing high quality content and relevant regulatory and technology updates is key to maintaining a broad knowledge base for our drinking water and wastewater professionals who serve our Idaho communities.

In addition to robust knowledge and skills training, several certificates or other credentials will be earned or made available to be earned. Some examples include:

CPR Certification

Utility Management Certification

OSHA Safety

California State University Sacramento, Office of Water Program, certificates for successful testing and completion of courses:

- Small Water Systems
- Water Distribution System Operation and Maintenance
- Water Treatment Plant Operation, Volumes 1-2
- Operation & Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems, Volumes 1-2
- Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants, Volumes 1-2

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

With the apprenticeship program, we are developing a standardized curriculum for 2021 rather

than the individualized approach we currently have. This standardized curriculum will offer future apprentices a “cohort model” with the ability to engage in shorter and more frequent classes with options for virtual participation, led by an expert industry instructor. This provides more applicants in Idaho the opportunity to enroll in the program, receive quality classroom instruction, engage in discussions with their peers, gain on-the-job training hours and be ready to test for their appropriate operator’s license. By providing wage reimbursement for mentors and scholarships for apprentices, the project helps rural communities with limited financial resources make proactive steps to being an employer supporter of the apprenticeship program. Drinking Water and Wastewater Operations Specialists need acquired knowledge and on-the-job training hours to meet requirements to sit and test for OIT-Operator in Training, Class I, II, III licensures. Criteria for class levels is determined by the size and scope of the public utility they are a responsible for.

Based on IDAPA 24.05.01 rules of the Idaho Board of Drinking and Wastewater Professionals, the apprenticeship program reduces the time it takes for operators to get their Class II license from three years to two years which is a further incentive to enroll and accelerate one’s career objectives. IRWA is working with Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses on approval of an Advanced Apprenticeship program designed to provide hands on experience and education related to Class III facilities, thereby providing more accessibility for those interested in obtaining their Class III license.

Though many of the Operations Specialists choose to remain with their local water utility, access to advanced training courses with virtual options opens the door for them to move to a larger class drinking water or wastewater utility, increasing their professional opportunities and advancement in their career. A broader knowledge base than the one required for their own utility system is also valuable as many of our operators can assist with neighboring communities’ utility systems as well. For all operators, annual continuing education credits are required to retain their license while keeping their knowledge base current for ongoing regulatory updates and industry best practices. IRWA’s ongoing training would be more accessible for all utilities throughout the state via this project funding.

**Question:** If training exists in the marketplace, describe why this project better meets employer and/or workforce needs.

IRWA is the primary source of required training for Drinking Water and Wastewater Operators seeking to obtain or maintain their licenses throughout Idaho. Employers acknowledge the lack of experienced operations specialists as they try to fill vacant or soon-to-be vacant positions. Most employers do not have resources to fully train a current employee on their own without the support and options of classroom technical training geared to the new person in the drinking water/wastewater industry. Time and travel costs to attend regional workshops are often barriers for many small, rural communities. This project opens the door to virtual classroom training for the apprenticeship program as well as offering options for seasoned operators to readily stay abreast of industry practices, requirements, and updates needed to manage their local utilities and maintain their license with continuing education unit requirements. Thinking more broadly than either the traditional classroom model, or individual online course offerings, blended learning formats, including onsite and virtual, can increase participation, give access to more advanced workshops, and create opportunities for discussions among peers with like experience and knowledge that may be geographically distant to them.

**Question:** Who will receive training from this project (examples – general public or current employees) and how will they be recruited?

Those who will receive training from this project include currently licensed drinking water and wastewater operators, incumbent workers not yet licensed and aspiring to gain the knowledge



and experience needed to test for their appropriate class license, and newly hired apprentices. Minimum qualifications for participants in the apprenticeship program include the following:

- Be at least 18 years old,
- High school diploma or equivalent,
- Physical capability of performing the essential functions of the apprenticeship program with or without reasonable accommodations,
- Passing drug screening,
- Passing background check,
- Valid driver's license.

Prospective apprentices must either complete an application and interview or qualify for direct entry into the program by completing a pre-apprenticeship program or by qualifying as an existing employee of an employer with a completed employer acceptance agreement. (See attached: Apprenticeship Standards, Appendix C - Affirmative Action Plan)

IRWA staff will disseminate information about our training opportunities to our membership and industry partners. For our apprenticeship program we will make outreach to under-served areas across the state through schools, employment service offices, career fairs, social media outlets, and a radio PSA. IRWA technical assistance field staff serving the entire state will share information with overburdened utilities, including tribal utilities, as part of their service visits.

**Question:** Please describe any credentials that participants will obtain.

Apprentices will be credentialed through the national Registered Apprenticeship program, U.S. Department of Labor. Participants will have the opportunity to obtain various certificates: OSHA Safety, Utility Management and Utility Finance. Apprentices will be prepared to test for their appropriate Idaho Class I, II and III licensures for a Water/Wastewater system with certificate review courses. Completion of the Registered Apprenticeship program may be transferred to other states and Operator licenses earned in Idaho have reciprocity with several other states in our country. Existing operators can earn continuing education units that are approved by the Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses to facilitate annual renewal.

**Question:** Who will provide the training? (Identify the entity that will provide training, the qualifications of the trainer(s), and location of training site.)

Idaho Rural Water Association (IRWA) will be the provider of training. IRWA is an association of more than 350 of Idaho's drinking water and wastewater utilities and is currently the primary source of required training for Drinking Water and Wastewater Operators seeking to obtain or maintain their licenses throughout Idaho. Instructors will include the IRWA team and other industry experts. Qualifications for trainers will include any applicable certifications and/or class license or an advanced degree relevant to the course topic, as well as an appropriate amount of practical experience. The apprenticeship classroom instruction will be held in the IRWA training facility in Boise, Idaho. Virtual participation for apprentice classes and other Boise located classes will be available.

To accommodate a more consistent delivery of training to multiple cohorts for both drinking water and wastewater an experienced instructor in both fields will be hired by IRWA. When the instructor is not training, they will work on course preparation and continuous course development and improvement. The instructor can also identify and coordinate with other industry experts to deliver more complex topics or to enhance the in-person hands on training sessions hosted at the IRWA training center periodically.

**Question:** Where will the training be provided?

Training will be provided at the Idaho Rural Water Association training facility, 6395 W. Gowen Road, Boise, Idaho with virtual options available.

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

IRWA currently provides technical training and assistance for public Drinking Water and Wastewater Utility System operators serving rural and urban communities across Idaho. As Idaho grows so do the demands on public infrastructure. Despite its growth, Idaho remains a rural state with roughly 98% of the communities having populations of less than 50,000. Approximately 90% of Idaho's residents live in towns with less than 10,000 people. We are very aware of the limited budgets these small communities have for adequate training of their employees.

The industry as a whole has underinvested in training for new and established workers. Complexity in the industry's roles has continued to change over the years and preparing operators for this growing knowledge and skillset has not been met, whether that be in Idaho or nationally. A report from the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings, *Renewing the Water Workforce: Improving Water Infrastructure and Creating a Pipeline to Opportunity*, Joseph W. Kane and Adie Tomer, 2018, states, "Difficulties defining needed skill and creating portable, versatile credentials is an ongoing frustration across the sector, and the pathways to developing such knowledge and skills are unclear, especially from region to region. Similar to other skilled trades, many water workers start as apprentices, where a combination of on-the-job training and classroom instruction help equip them with the practical and theoretical tenets of their occupation. After completing their apprenticeship, the worker becomes a journey level tradesman and then transitions into a role with more limited supervision. However, the education and licensing requirements for these positions, including plumbers and water operators, can vary widely across different states, and not all utilities or regions have flexible training programs in place to equip workers with needed experience. In addition, the changing nature of work in the sector, including new types of field work, new design guidelines, and increased automation, only add to the breadth of skills needed."

IRWA is committed to serving as a proactive leader in developing and growing our Idaho drinking water and wastewater industry professionals. This project is aimed at increasing the training opportunities for our operators by expanding access to industry experts with up-to-date information on regulatory changes, technology improvements and best practices for management of water systems.

The development of our future standardized and robust apprentice curriculum requires an increase in instructor hours. Costs for this improved curriculum include tuition fees, study materials, travel, and wage reimbursement for mentors. Project funding will assist rural communities in making the commitment to supporting an apprentice for a stable future management of their water system.

When IRWA completed construction on a technical training center in June 2020 with the capability to provide both classroom and hands-on training for Idaho's operators we had no idea of the impact the Coronavirus would have on our training capabilities. We have been stretched to develop other strategies for providing the required annual training for our industry's public utility operators as well as the necessity to grow our workforce pool to meet the needs of retiring operators. Blending in-the-class and virtual participants for identified training needs is the strategy we are embracing. We also believe that even though the Coronavirus made us aware of the need for more virtual training options, these opportunities will be of great value for our longer-term plan of action for training.

**Question:** Will tuition be charged? If yes, please explain.

Tuition will be charged for our apprenticeship program. Currently, IRWA's member training rate

is \$120 for six (6) hours of class training. IRWA does not make a profit on its training classes but instead strives to meet the costs of instructor fees, marketing, and course administration. Annual tuition for 24 classes the apprentice will complete yearly will be \$1,000, which is less than half the cost of our member training rates for same number of classes. The concept of an apprenticeship program is new to this industry and new to Idaho's communities. Even the most minimal training can be a financial hardship on some of Idaho's communities. So, we hope to make the transition to charging tuition as reasonable as possible. Through the grant, we hope to offer a 50% match for apprenticeship tuition.

## Training Schedule

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Provide a quarterly training break-out for year one and year two. For year three show the number of planned NEW participants entering training and number of individuals exiting training for each course of training, for each quarter. Any example is provided on the provided training schedule.

### [Training Schedule](#)

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

1/4/2021

**Question:** How many training sessions will be held during the 36 months of the grant?

Training sessions for the general membership will be approximately 162 (6-hour) sessions in three years.

Training sessions for the apprentice program will be approximately 228 (6-hour) sessions in three years. The curriculum for the apprentice cohorts will be designed for two semesters a year (January and July start dates) with the months of June and December off. Apprentices will spend 144-148 hours per year in classroom & technical training. The scheduled outline is typically two (2) 3-hour sessions a week, two (2) weeks per month for 12 classroom hours each of the five (5) months of the semester. There will be additional six (6) hour courses scheduled and led by IRWA field experts, and other industry trainers. Each semester an eight (8) hour day IRWA training will be held onsite and all participants will be required to attend (no virtual option) for safety topics and hands-on skills and practice.

**Question:** Please upload Training Schedule form here. A link to the form is provided at the top of this section.

[Anticipated Employer Participation.xlsx](#) (10/19/2020 1:30 PM)

[Industry Sector Grant Training Schedule\\_FINAL tb.xlsx](#) (10/8/2020 12:11 PM)

## Sustainability

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The industry consortium will need to show if and how the project will be sustained past the grant period.

**Question:** Please describe if and how the project will be sustained past the grant period?

The drinking water/wastewater professional industry is experiencing a shift in required knowledge and expertise as regulatory standards change and the complexity of infrastructure facilities evolve. At one time, drinking water and wastewater operators represented a local community member with basic mechanical knowledge and abilities. The last 10-15 years has seen a significant shift in the licensing requirements and the level of expertise needed to properly operate and maintain these facilities and to keep communities in compliance with state and federal regulations. It will take time for community decision makers to recognize the level of investment needed in hiring professionals instead of an available community member. The decision maker's perception about the level of investment needed for its communities will likely take longer than three (3) years. So, tuition fees will increase as the market will allow but it will take some time for this program to become fully sustainable. We will work to identify additional means of supporting our program but estimates at this time is that full transition from the grant will be a challenge.

Apprenticeship program tuition fees will increase as the program matures. We expect to gain industry recognition in our apprenticeship program with a more robust curriculum during the next three years. With the recognition of a value-added program successfully preparing new drinking water & wastewater operators for future roles, we will increase tuition fees. We believe our results will justify the fees. In addition, we will demonstrate that the cost of tuition is much less than the cost of searching for and hiring less qualified individuals with less commitment to the industry and the community. The cost of employing and training properly licensed employees is far less than the cost of hiring licensed contract operators which may exceed employee wages and benefits by as much as 50%. Year four (4) fees reflect the elimination of the tuition scholarship program as well as increased tuition to cover the cost of books and some instructor fees. Fees will increase as much as possible while still being a marketable program and not pricing the program beyond what the market will support.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development (USDA-RD) program invests in the country's infrastructure through grants and low interest rate loans for construction of public drinking water and wastewater utilities. Most Idaho communities have directly benefited from USDA-RD's infrastructure programs. In addition to helping fund the brick and mortar infrastructure, USDA-RD recognizes the importance of proper operation of expensive infrastructure which includes properly trained employees. Understanding that the industry sector is expected to lose between 30 to 50 percent of its workforce to retirement during this decade, USDA-RD has committed some funding for the development of a registered apprenticeship program through National Rural Water Association. As a subgrantee, IRWA will continue to maximize funding in support of the program through National Rural Water Association and its partners like USDA-RD. There is a strong probability of continued funding from USDA-RD.

General IRWA classes are charged training fees intended to cover instructor fees, marketing and course administration. These training fees offset the direct cost of training and will continue to be self-supporting overall. With additional space and specialized training equipment available at its new training center, IRWA intends to begin to offer classes to related industry sectors including plumbers in need of hands on training for areas such as backflow assembly training and licensed backflow assembly tester certifications, safety flagging, OSHA certification, etc.

In addition, IRWA will work to expand the use of its state-of-the-art training facility to others outside our industry. For example, IRWA recently rented its space to the Idaho Transportation Department for a uniquely designed hands on class for a heavy equipment training pilot program

offered through the Federal Highway Administration to increase the pipeline of skilled workers for highway construction projects. The program hosted its classroom and hands on simulator training at IRWA's training facility to provide students with knowledge of heavy highway construction and provided different types of related certifications such as forklift certification, OSHA-10 certification, hazardous waste operations and emergency response (HAZWOPER-40)

certification and others from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER).

## Project Outcomes

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Grant objectives must have measurable results on an individual participant level. Employees or job candidates should learn new skills that were not previously available and gain enhanced skills that allow them to achieve to a higher earning level.

**Question:** Number of participants/incumbent workers who will receive classroom training?

2140.00

**Question:** Number of participants/incumbent workers who will complete classroom training?

2140.00

**Question:** Number of participants/incumbent workers who will receive structured on-the-job training?

40.00

**Question:** Number of participants/incumbent workers who will complete structured on-the-job training?

40.00

**Question:** Number of individuals attaining some type of recognized credential, including degrees, occupational licenses, industry certifications and/or Idaho SkillStack Badges.

40.00

**Question:** Average wage for incumbent workers prior to training?

\$15.25

**Question:** Average wage for incumbent workers after training?

\$19.35

**Question:** Number of open enrollment individuals entering training-related employment within 30 days of training completion?

0.00

## Budget

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The application must provide a detailed budget identifying the direct personnel costs, fringe benefits, equipment cost, facility costs and other identified costs to deliver this training. For each line item on the budget, provide the budget amount, a detailed narrative describing how the line item amount was determined, the necessity of the item to develop/deliver training, and whether the cost is supported by grant funds or partner match (cash or in-kind).

## [Budget Sheet](#)

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

We researched the application for the USDA-RD Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant however, we were not eligible because the minimum amount was \$50,000. The cost of technical equipment and installation is approximately \$29,000. IRWA did utilize \$4,361 of NRWA's apprenticeship funds for FY 20 which ended 9/30/20 to purchase cameras needed for the project. However, funds are unavailable in FY 21 for additional purchase and installation of equipment needed for full implementation of the virtual training center. We anticipate installation of equipment will be completed by 12/31/20 pending grant approval. An instructor for this project is not otherwise attainable. Otherwise, the program would be reliant on volunteer trainers which tend to be less consistent and does not facilitate a consistent, professional training program we are striving towards.

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

This project aligns closely with the WDTF goals by: • Increasing the economic mobility of Idahoans through training that leads to wage gains and retention. • Providing timely assistance to employers while shifting focus to broader talent pipeline development strategies that serve multiple employers. • Supporting growth of the economy by assisting employers with integration of technology, specifically through the development of skills in their existing and/or new employees. • Providing a return on investment to Idahoans as evidenced by increased wages, retention of Idaho's workforce, credential attainment, and customer satisfaction. • Promoting innovation in talent development. • Encouraging replication of best practices in talent pipeline development.

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

[Industry Sector Grant Budget Narrative and Expenditures Oct 2020.FINAL sr.xlsx](#) (10/21/2020 11:55 AM)

## Tracking and Reporting

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WDTF grant funds must be expended within a 36-month period. Award of funds will require the lead applicant/grant recipient to provide "skill training plans" for each job classification, identification of vendor training, training descriptions, skill attainments and costs. If the consortium provides internal training, the training must be a structured on-the-job training with a specific outline of the training curriculum, skills gained, expected outcomes and details on the effectiveness of the training.

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

Idaho Rural Water Association, 6395 W Gowen Rd, Boise, ID 83709

**Question:** Contact Person First Name

Kelsie

**Question:** Contact Person Last Name

Cole

**Question:** Job Title

Apprenticeship Coordinator

**Question:** Contact Phone

208-407-4418

**Question:** Email Address

kcole@idahoruralwater.com

**Question:** Street Address

6395 W Gowen Road

**Question:** City

Boise

**Question:** State

ID

**Question:** Zip Code

83709

## Organizational and Fiscal Capacity

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The grant recipient – either the lead applicant or the training provider identified above – must have the organizational and fiscal capacity to track funds and safeguard spending.

**Question:** Please provide a short summary outlining your organizational capacity to complete this project?



Idaho Rural Water Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation whose mission is to provide technical assistance, training, and a strong representative voice for the benefit of Idaho's drinking water and wastewater utility systems. Most of the technical assistance IRWA provides is funded through both federal and state grants for the purpose of supporting Idaho's utility providers. IRWA is familiar with grant administration and compliance with 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards). IRWA has recently completed construction of a 10,800 square foot technical training center in Boise, Idaho to carry out its mission more effectively. Historically, IRWA hosts about 60 one-day training sessions throughout the state of Idaho as well as two annual technical training conferences to train operators and provide the continuing education required for Idaho's licensed drinking water and wastewater operators. The new training center will provide an opportunity to conduct both traditional classroom as well as hands on training in the facility's indoor water line simulator and the outdoor training range. In 2018, IRWA introduced an apprenticeship program to attract new interest in the industry as most Idaho's licensed operators are approaching retirement age. IRWA is well aligned to complete this project.

**Question:** Please describe the grant recipient's accounting structure, job titles, and qualifications of staff responsible for fiscal actions.

IRWA has two skilled accounting professionals responsible for fiscal actions related to this grant. Most technical assistance IRWA provides is funded through both federal and state grants for the purpose of supporting Idaho's utility providers. IRWA is familiar with grant administration and compliance with 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards). The CEO of Idaho Rural Water, Shelley Roberts, is a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and has earned her Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Boise State University. Shelley has over 28 years of experience working as an accounting professional. Shelley joined IRWA as CEO 10 years ago and has been the primary point of contact for several state and federal grants with an annual budget of \$1.1 million. Tina Manolopoulos is IRWA's Financial and Human Resources Specialist with over 20 years of experience and a bachelor's degree of Office Administration from the University of Idaho. Tina has worked with IRWA for 2 years.

**Question:** Please 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. The application may be rejected if audit findings exist. Attach signed statement here.

[IRWA Audit June 30 2019.pdf](#) (10/8/2020 12:28 PM)

## 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