



S.T.E.P.

Safety Training & Education Program

Grant Program Information

(Updated 10/2023)



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General Grant Information

Safety Training & Education Program (STEP)

Section I

Purpose:

The purpose of the Safety Training & Education Program (STEP Grant) is to provide financial assistance to promote workplace safety practices through safety training and education. The program seeks to enlist the resources of North Dakota associations and employee organizations to assist in reducing injuries and accidents.

An association is a body of individuals or businesses operating under a common name, whether incorporated or not, who share common occupational risks and are grouped for a common cause or objective. According to NDCC 92-05-03-02, an association or group comprised of North Dakota employers or employees active and in good standing with the North Dakota secretary of state for at least one year are eligible to apply for an organization grant.

Eligibility Requirements

Associations eligible to participate in the STEP Grant must meet the following requirements:

- Provide an association membership listing including active WSI covered employers
- Submit a completed grant application packet
- Have a high emphasis on workplace safety and health
- Applicant must demonstrate the need for funding addressing all guidelines outlined in the Procedures section below
- Active and in good standing with the North Dakota secretary of state for at least one year
- Application must be approved by WSI Grant Review Committee
- Eligible participants may initially request up to \$175,000.00, with the potential to receive an additional \$50,000 for a maximum award amount of \$225,000.00 per calendar year. (See STEP Grant Funding Limits)

Grant Funding

The program period is not to exceed the current calendar year in which the application was submitted. Additional grant requests are dependent upon results and availability of funds. All proposals must accurately reflect necessary and approved costs for that time period. Expenses incurred prior to application approval will not be paid by WSI. WSI reserves the right to require program participants to provide matching funds for certain budget items being requested.

Any changes to the application proposal must be agreed to in writing by WSI in advance of any change.

Items Ineligible for Funding:

The following items are ineligible for funding through this program:

- Commissions – No grant monies may be allocated from a grant award for the payment of any fee associated with the advising, preparation, submission, or any other service provided in the process of the award of grant funds.

- Consultant Fees and Administrative Fees - No grant monies may be allocated from a grant award for any consulting services in which expert advice or recommendation is provided in a particular area of expertise.
- Salaries & Benefits.
- Operating Expenses (rent, telephone/cell phone/Internet, utilities, etc.).
- Vehicles - Ineligible items include vehicles and their associated costs including gasoline, insurance, registration fees, title fees and maintenance costs, etc.
- Ergonomic assessments, consultation, training, and equipment.
- Training Equipment (computers, projectors, printers etc.).
- Food or beverages provided at conferences or training events
- Miscellaneous expenses (processing fees, freight, or transportation costs)

STEP Program Funding Limits

STEP Grant recipients are eligible for a \$225,000.00 annual award. If the grant recipient reaches the \$175,000.00 within the current award year and are using the STEP Grant funding for scholarships, they may submit a request in writing documenting a continuing need for grant funds. Any further award must be used for the same program and for the same purpose contained in the initial grant request. A new grant Agreement must be executed by the parties outlining the further grant award. Grant awards are dependent upon availability of funds.

General Terms & Conditions:

If funding is provided through WSI, the successful STEP Grant applicant must adhere to the following terms and conditions:

1. Applicant must get prior approval for Keynote speakers/instructors prior to submission of application.
2. Keynote speakers/instructors MUST have an emphasis in workplace safety and health.
3. Applicant must submit a signed grant application to include an action plan proposal defining the scope, goals, expected outcomes and timelines of the project.
4. If any Grant Administrator requires access to confidential WSI documents and files during the program period, they will be required to sign a Confidentiality Statement agreeing to keep the information confidential. The language of both NDCC 65-04-15 (pertaining to confidentiality of employer information) and NDCC 65-05-32 (pertaining to claims information) will be provided.
5. WSI and STEP Grant participants agree to share all educational materials, as well as loss prevention and loss control products developed using this funding. All products developed may be provided by WSI to other industry associations, firms, or employers to enhance the safety efforts for the benefit of all North Dakota employees.
6. Program participants must agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the State of North Dakota, its agencies, officers, and employees (State) from any and all claims of any nature, including all costs, expenses and attorney fees that may in any manner result from or arise out of this agreement. The legal defense provided by Program participants to the STATE under this provision must be free of any conflicts of interest, even if retention of separate legal counsel for the STATE is necessary. Program participants also agree to defend, indemnify, and hold the STATE harmless for all costs, expenses, and attorney's fees incurred in establishing and litigating the indemnification provided herein. This obligation shall continue after the termination of this agreement.

7. The Grant Administrator must submit an expense requisition within 60 days of the month the expenses were incurred. Expense requisition forms may only be disbursed once per month for each approved STEP grant participant. Expense requisition forms must include itemized receipts and invoices.
8. WSI will periodically audit the financial and non-financial records of the program participants as they pertain to STEP grant such audits may be performed by WSI personnel or by outside auditors selected by WSI.
9. WSI reserves the right to conduct surveys to evaluate the effectiveness and performance of any and all STEP grant projects.
10. Program participants must agree to maintain all pertinent records related to this program for a period of six years from the end of the project.
11. Program participants will not collect a fee or receive money from anyone other than WSI for services and/or materials rendered/provided through STEP grant funds unless prior approval is given in writing by WSI.
12. Both WSI and Grant Administrator have the authority to terminate the STEP grant agreement at any time during the program, with a 60-day advanced notification in writing. If the program participant terminates, all funds will be returned.
13. An agreement outlining the responsibilities and obligations of the parties must be executed before any funds are disbursed.
14. Grant Administrator acknowledges that WSI will post grantee name and award amount as recipient of Safety Grant funds in WSI publications and on WSI's website. Grant files are also subject to open records laws under Section 65-04-15.
15. WSI will not provide funding for training events which did not occur or were cancelled.
16. WSI staff may attend the event to observe or participate free of charge.

Public Inquires and Media Releases

If a STEP Grant application is approved, requests for information regarding the project shall be referred to WSI for response. Media releases pertaining to STEP award, or to the services or projects to which they relate, shall not be made without prior WSI written approval.

Section II

STEP Grant Procedures

The following procedure shall be followed by the applicant:

1. **Obtain prior approval for keynote speakers/instructors.**
2. Submit a STEP Grant Application to wsistepgrant@nd.gov with the appropriate signatures and an original proposal signed by the Grant Administrator **90 days** prior to the event. The proposal must explain how the project will promote safety, prevent injuries, and change the culture of the employer/entity. The proposal must concisely outline the following items relating to the project:
 - a. Complete the STEP Grant Application Form (SFN 58596)
 - b. Statement of the need, problem, issue, topic, idea, etc. to be addressed (relevant data supporting this statement should be included).
 - c. Description of constituency to be served and how they will benefit.
 - d. Detailed explanation of project including goals and process to be followed. Detailed description of activities planned to accomplish these goals. Outline the curriculum, and provide a description of written materials, handouts, audiovisuals, etc. to be used. If applicable, describe who will provide training and the trainer's credentials. Include location, dates, times etc.
 - e. Outline the anticipated methodology to be used to track the results throughout the education and/or training process. The applicant should anticipate what data must be gathered and in what form it can be presented to WSI to demonstrate the effectiveness of the education or training.
 - f. Statement of how the project will benefit WSI.
 - g. Timetable for accomplishing goals.
 - h. Itemized, detailed budget. Actual invoices/receipts are required for all expenses, except mileage and meals which may be reimbursed without receipt. These expenses are reimbursable according to the North Dakota Office of Management and Budget per diem policy and must include the name, title and employer affiliation of the person traveling in addition to the date, time, and purpose of travel.
 - i. Description of other organizations or entities, if any, participating in this STEP Grant project. If applicable, letters of corroboration should be included from each organization.
 - j. Long-term sources and strategies for funding the program after initial funding by WSI ends, if applicable.
 - k. Use of the program's results and how they will be disseminated and shared with other North Dakota employers, etc.
 - l. Outline of how the project will be evaluated and presented.
 - i. Participation information must be collected at the training site and include agenda, training topic, name, company name, address, email and phone number.
 - m. Evaluation forms must be provided to all attendees.
3. If approved, the applicant must sign and date an Award Agreement.
4. A written summary report is required upon project completion. Summary report is to include project scope, attendees, goals achieved, successes, lessons learned and survey results of project.
5. STEP Grant Award Recipients exceeding \$50,000.00 may be required to present project outcomes

in person to WSI at the completion of the project.

STEP Grant Procedures - Request for Additional Funding

The following procedure shall be followed by the applicant and completed within the eligible grant year.

1. Complete the following sections on the STEP Grant Application Form (SFN 58596)
 - a. Section 1 – Applicant organization
 - b. Section 2 – Grant request proposal checklist
 - i. Statement of need to include an explanation outlining the use of the initial \$175,000.00 award.
 - ii. Estimated number of additional scholarships and funding needed.
 - c. Section 3 – Grant Supporting Documentation
 - i. A detailed breakdown of scholarships awarded.
 - Provide a breakdown by employer and amount awarded.
 - If different levels of scholarships were identified in the initial grant request, provide a breakdown by scholarship level.
 - d. Section 4 – Budget Information
 - e. Section 5 – Grant title and signatures
2. If approved, the applicant must sign and date an Award Agreement.

Section III

BUDGET PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Each STEP Grant applicant must submit a budget for the entire project period. The budget must reflect income and costs that will be incurred during this time period. No payment will be made for expenses incurred or services provided prior to or after the project period or that did not occur.

The budget proposal must use the same categories found on the STEP Grant application. Some categories may not apply to all projects. Expenses within each category MUST be itemized.

OPERATING EXPENSES

This category includes pre-approved program expenses incurred during the approved program period that are documented with an invoice. Expenses must be documented and submitted, with copies of receipts, on the Expense Requisition Form. Examples of Operating Expenses include Contracted services, educational & training materials, meeting & training room costs, travel, office supplies, printing, advertising, postage, etc.

Grantees whose grant related work requires travel out of town for business purposes may be eligible for "per diem" expenditure reimbursement. A "Per Diem" reimbursement request must be outlined in the proposal and budget submitted by the STEP applicant and must be approved by the Grant Review Board. "Per Diem" reimbursements will follow N.D.C.C. §44-08-04. A copy of the North Dakota Century Code may be found at <https://www.ndlegis.gov/cencode/t44c08.pdf>

Travel reimbursements for all contracted services/trainers/keynote speakers will also follow North Dakota Office of Management, Budget, Fiscal, and Administrative Policies #505, #511, #513, #516, and #518.

Copies of the North Dakota OMB Administrative Policies may be found on the following website: <https://www.omb.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/financial-transparency/fiscaladminpolicy.pdf>

Travel reimbursement requests must be submitted using the Non-Employee Travel Reimbursement Claim Form attached to this application and must include hotel receipts, date/time/purpose of travel for meals and mileage reimbursement. Meals, and mileage will be reimbursed at current state rates. Prior approval must be obtained to submit a travel reimbursement form other than the one noted above.

Meal Allowance

6:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

12:00 noon – 6:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m. – 12:00 midnight

Percentage

20% Daily Rate

30% Daily Rate

50% Daily Rate

Section IV

STEP Grant Participant Selection Criteria

WSI seeks proposals that:

1. Provide the greatest savings in terms of injury prevention and safety practices through **education and training**.
2. Demonstrate a commitment to effective workers' compensation loss prevention and loss control.
3. Offer an effective, dynamic plan which provides documented results.

STEP funds will be awarded to entities to create new loss prevention measures or supplement and improve existing programs.

All STEP Grant proposals received by WSI are reviewed on their merits and scored by the WSI Review Committee. Any award made under this program is within the sole discretion and authority of WSI. Any appeal, change or review needs to be submitted in writing to the Loss Control Program Specialist for committee review and decision.

All applicants will be notified of approval or denial of their request; however, WSI is not obligated to provide detailed information on why any applicant was or was not selected. WSI reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any minor irregularities, and to make awards in the best interest of WSI with or without further discussions or negotiations.

Any or all applicants may be invited by WSI to make an oral presentation and answer questions at the WSI Bismarck office at any time.

All STEP Grant application proposals and accompanying documentation become the property of WSI.

Inquiries regarding this Safety Training & Education Program (STEP) should be directed to:

Program Specialist
Workforce Safety & Insurance
1600 E. Century Ave., Suite 1
PO Box 5585
Bismarck, ND 58506-5585
1-701-328-3800 or 1-800-777-5033