

# Request for Proposals

From Manufacturing Employers in Manatee & Sarasota Counties to receive funding from the CareerEdge Manufacturing Employer Partnership for 2015

**Request for Proposals Issued:** [April 7, 2015](#)

**Proposal responses due:** [May 8, 2015](#) by 5:00 p.m. EST



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### Funding Opportunity Description

The CareerEdge Funders Collaborative is requesting proposals from manufacturing employers located in the bi-county area who can make a compelling case that the CareerEdge *Employer Partnership* model can help them advance incumbent workers into higher-skill/wage positions, and create additional jobs for newer workforce entrants.

Respondents to this RFP may request a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$30,000 to execute *Employee Training & Support Programs* of up to 12 months in duration, beginning as early as June 5, 2015 and ending no later than June 4, 2016. CareerEdge is interested in funding Programs that provide incumbent workers with the training and support needed to improve their job performance, secure promotions to higher-level positions, and/or earn wage increases.

CareerEdge has so far established *Employer Industry Partners*, and has invested over **\$1,178,878** in *Employer Grant Investments*, which were matched by Employer Contributions of **\$4,558,329** to jointly fund Programs that included the following:

- + Design of “career ladders of advancement,” that chart the pathways to promote incumbent workers into higher-wage positions, and of “accelerated entry-ways” that chart the pre-requisites needed to fill new positions created when incumbent workers are promoted;
- + Development of the employers’ human resource support systems to handle the nuances of the new advancement pathways and processes; and
- + Training – both “in house” and third-party - to advance incumbent workers and adequately prepare the workers who are hired to fill new positions.
- + Participating in industry partnership committee.

- + Employee “Supports” that help workers complete training programs; these range from paid training time and English-as-a-Second-Language courses, to on-site childcare during trainings.

### **Summary Details about 2015 Funding Available for Manufacturers**

Minimum award amount: \$10,000 | Maximum award amount: \$30,000

Total funding available: \$150,000 | Anticipated number of awards: 5

## **Introduction to CareerEdge**

CareerEdge is an innovative workforce development initiative focused in Manatee and Sarasota counties, officially launched in 2010 to help low-skill/low-wage workers advance into higher-skill/higher-wage careers, while providing employers with the skilled workers they need to accelerate their growth rates. CareerEdge was created, in large part, to address the **persistent and urgent need** for a new approach to workforce development that effectively fuels the region’s economic growth. Even in a healthier economy than what the area is experiencing today, Manatee and Sarasota counties suffer from a **long-standing misalignment** between the skill-level of the area’s labor force and the labor needs of the employment sectors that have the potential to drive a stronger rate of growth, **if** they were supplied with skilled workers.

Thus, in addition to specific workforce **programs** with local employers, CareerEdge is also working toward improvements to the overall workforce **system**. Our work focuses on:

1. **Increasing investments:** CareerEdge is working to increase philanthropic investments into workforce development, specifically for underserved segments of the workforce.
2. **Employer Partnerships:** CareerEdge is working with employers to help fund and develop training & support programs that help **advance incumbent workers** into higher-skill/wage positions, and thereby **open entry-level positions** for newer entrants to the workforce.
3. **Educational bridge building:** CareerEdge is investing with other workforce intermediaries and education institutions to develop a more seamless and integrated career education platform that is more tailored to the needs of the regions’ employers.
4. **Policy advocacy:** CareerEdge is working to influence policy decisions about workforce programming and funding, in part by educating leading advocacy organizations and philanthropists on innovations and directions in workforce development.

After extensive research, CareerEdge selected 4 sectors to be the focus of its work (healthcare, manufacturing, technology, and transportation & warehousing), because each of these sectors has the unique potential to create more new high-skill/high-wage jobs, compared with other sectors of the regional economy.

In a feat of organizing strength, CareerEdge was designated in 2010 as one of only 30 “collaboratives” being supported by the *National Fund for Workforce Solutions* to address some of the most glaring deficiencies in the region’s workforce system. The National Fund is a partnership of nearly 300 funders who are investing \$30 millions in local communities to help get people back to work and ensure that American businesses are able to compete. In 36

communities across the country, the National Fund is working closely with employers and leaders from the public and nonprofit sectors to find solutions, and test how “lessons learned” from ground-breaking pilot projects can be applied on a national scale. In each community where the National Fund invests, regional collaboratives bring together government, philanthropic organizations, and businesses to craft local strategies. CareerEdge is one of those collaboratives, and is already garnering national attention for its successes.

## Important dates & milestones

Respondents to this RFP should take note of the following deadlines and milestones.

Milestones	Dates/times
RFP release and made available on the CareerEdge website ( <a href="http://www.careeredgefund.org">www.careeredgefund.org</a> )	April 8, 2015
Information Session for Prospective Applicants (MANDATORY FOR ALL APPLICANTS)	April 20, 2015 SCF-Lakewood Ranch
DEADLINE: Proposals due (responses received after the deadline will not be reviewed)	May 8, 2015 by 5 pm EST
Analysis of Responses distributed to CareerEdge Investor Board	May 18, 2015
CareerEdge Investor Board Meeting held to short-list prospective grantees	Date to be determined
Site Visits to applicants who are short-listed	Dates to be determined
Grant decisions announced	May 22, 2015
Final grant agreements executed	May 29, 2015
Grant funds disbursed	June 1, 2015
Programs may begin	June 5, 2015

## Important contacts & resources

To learn more, we encourage you to attend the Information Session listed in the table above. After that, and after a thorough review of this RFP, we welcome you to ask for guidance about the design of your *Employee Training & Support Program* by calling Jon Pierce, Program Coordinator, at 941-363-7233. CareerEdge also offers an **Employer Support Platform** that can help support your Program with the following:

- **Academic Coaches** to provide one-on-one counseling and troubleshooting with employees who face barriers to completing their training programs and to refer them to a range of support resources available through CareerEdge Partners.
- **Industry Advisory Councils** to help same-sector employers share best practices, leverage shared resources, and stay current on the latest workforce innovations in their industries.
- **Resource Partnerships** with the Bradenton Area Economic Development Corporation, the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County, CareerSource Suncoast, and State College of Florida Workforce to give our Employers Partners access to the latest industry

research, funding opportunities, help with career laddering, incentives packaging, and other services.

## What we are looking for in your Programs

Your Program should be simple and result in measurable outcomes for your workers and for your organization. Here is a brief summary of a **sample** Employee Training & Support Program that would be attractive to CareerEdge Investors.

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XYZ Corporation received \$40,000 from CareerEdge and \$10,000 in “aligned resources” from Suncoast Workforce to provide training to 56 employees. The trainings included technical certifications, along with soft skills training in communications, and will be offered in partnership with ABC Technical Institute. XYZ will provide 24 hours of on-the-job training activities, and ABC will offer a 16-week certification course. Once employees completed the trainings successfully, 18 of them will be promoted into higher-paying positions (with an average pay increase of \$1.75 per hour); and the remainder will be eligible for promotions as new openings are created.

Employees who enter the training program will be supported by paid training time and flexible scheduling that prevents them from losing paid hours of work, along with free training materials and supplies. They will also be supported by a CareerEdge Academic Coach to help them access additional resources from CareerEdge partners, as needed.

In addition to the grants received from CareerEdge and Suncoast Workforce, XYZ is investing matching funds of \$22,500 to support the program, which includes our investment of 10 percent of a Human Resource Coordinator’s time to organize the program, and 10 percent of an Administrative Assistant’s time, along with investments in the supports listed above.

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## A note about “Aligned Resources”

“Aligned resources” are financial and in-kind contributions that come from other organizations that can help enhance your Program. As a prime example, Suncoast Workforce offers funding under its Employed Worker Training (EWT) program to help employers offset the cost of short-term trainings. Suncoast has established a relationship with CareerEdge and will evaluate applications for EWT funding that supplement the Program you are proposing to CareerEdge. To access the Suncoast EWT application form, visit [www.careersourcesuncoast.org](http://www.careersourcesuncoast.org).

## Content and Form of Proposal Submission

You are required to submit one complete copy of the proposal **electronically** (hard copies are **not** required) to Jon Pierce, Program Coordinator, at [jon@careeredgefund.org](mailto:jon@careeredgefund.org)

**Formatting:** All proposals must be submitted on 8 ½" x 11" paper with 1-inch margins on all sides in a 12 point font, single spaced, all pages sequentially numbered.

**Respondents Pursuing CareerSource Suncoast Funds:** If you plan to submit an application to the CareerSource Suncoast Employed Working Training (EWT) program to enhance your proposed CareerEdge Program, your submission to CareerEdge should include a copy of your Suncoast EWT application with a “check” in the CareerEdge box on page 1 of the application.

**Proposal Contents:** All proposals should include the following sequentially ordered materials:

1. Cover page with your corporate logo and the contact information
2. Respondent Profile (see page 11 of this RFP for the profile form)
3. Program Narrative (follow the precise order outlined on pages X through X of this RFP)
4. Program & Budget Workbook (with all 4 separate worksheets completed)
5. Resumes of personnel who will implement the Program
6. Copy of EWT Application to Suncoast Workforce, if also applying for these funds

**Data Citations:** All data used within your proposal should come from recent published sources (2005-2014), and should be cited in footnotes (please do not use “end note” formatting) with sufficient detail to allow a reviewer to obtain and verify the data.

### How CareerEdge will score your proposal/select grantees

**Three Major Factors:** The ultimate responsibility for selecting CareerEdge Employer Partners rests with the CareerEdge Investor Board, which is made up of representatives of the organizations that invested financial resources into the CareerEdge initiative. The CareerEdge Executive Director and the Investor Group will use three steps to select grantees for 2012:

1. **The Executive Director’s SWOT Analysis of the proposals** – which will generate a “short list” of prospective grantees
2. **Site Visits by the Investor Board & Executive Director** – including interviews with the people who took part in preparing your proposal to explore more deeply the design of your Program, and a brief meeting with your CEO or COO
3. **The Point Scoring System** (below) – will be an important factor in our decision-making, and will be used to rank, and in some cases, eliminate prospective grantees

**The “Point Scoring” System:** Your proposals should include responses to 9 criteria, and each of your responses will be scored up to a maximum number of points.

Scoring Criteria	Maximum Points
1. Accuracy and completeness of Respondent Profile	10 points
2. The business needs that your program will address	10 points
3. The impact on your organization’s financial & business health	20 points
4. The workforce issues that your program will address	10 points
5. The impact of your program on the regional workforce system	10 points
6. The design of your Employee Training & Support Program	10 points
7. The impact of your program on the lives & careers of employees	20 points
8. Your “cost-share” in the Program	10 points
9. <b>BONUS</b> - The “support” component of your Program	5 points
<b>TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS</b>	<b>105 points</b>

## Program Narrative Guidelines & Scoring Criteria

In preparing the Program Narrative, we recommend that you cut-and-paste the headers for each criterion into your Microsoft Word document, and use them as headers within your proposal. We encourage you to review each component of your required response **before** starting the narrative.

### Criterion 1: Accuracy and completeness of Respondent Profile (10-points)

**Why this Criterion is important:** It is important for the CareerEdge Investor Board to have an accurate and complete picture of your organization. The description and data you provide in the Profile will be included in reports and other documents that will be used to inform, engage and influence elected officials, potential funders, and other important stakeholders.

**What form your response should take:** The Profile provided on page [11](#) of this RFP.

#### **Scoring Sub-Criteria:**

- + Data provided are accurate and as recent as possible, and are drawn from the most recent annual or quarterly reports of your organization
- + Each question or data field in the Profile form is completed

### Criterion 2: The business needs that your program will address (10 points)

**Why this Criterion is important:** In addition to its work in reducing the labor shortages and skills gap faced by many of the region's employers, CareerEdge is also working hand-in-hand with employers to help them more effectively find, hire, retain, and deploy employees (incumbent and new) in ways that improve their business performance. It's important for CareerEdge to understand some of the labor-related challenges that are preventing local employers from achieving stronger rates of growth in revenues, profits and quality.

**What form your response should take:** Two to three paragraphs, limited to 400 words total.

#### **Scoring Sub-Criteria:**

- + The response describes the human resource challenges you are facing, which may include difficulty retaining employees, and unacceptable rates of employee turnover.
- + The response describes the business performance challenges you are facing, which may include an inability to expand the products and services you offer, sub-par customer satisfaction, or unacceptable cost levels in areas of operations, such as the costs associated with employee turnover, redressing safety infractions, or excess scrap or waste. *Please note that you are asked for specific data under Criterion 3; your response in this section should be limited to a narrative description of the business needs that your Program will address.*

### Criterion 3: The impact on your organization's financial and business health (20 points)

**Why this Criterion is important:** At the same time as CareerEdge is working to eliminate labor skills gaps in the region, it is also working with employers to help them evolve their approach to labor force management in order to help employers grow revenue, reduce costs, and enhance the quality of the services and products they bring-to-market. This section helps us understand the impact of CareerEdge funding on your business performance.



**What form your response should take:** Two to three paragraphs, limited to 400 words total.

**Scoring sub-criteria:**

- + The response provides quantitative indicators of the tangible ways that the proposed program will improve the financial and business health of your organization, which may include an increase in revenue or profits; a reduction in costs associated with employee turnover, scrap or waste, or redressing safety infractions; an increase in price points for some products or services; or improvements in worker productivity levels.
- + The response provides qualitative indicators of the tangible ways in which the proposed program will improve the financial and business health of your organization, which may include an expansion/improvement in the type or quality of products and services your organization can offer; improved customer satisfaction ratings; improved worker satisfaction ratings; enhanced marketability; or added acclaim within your industry.

**Criterion 4: The workforce system issues that your program will address (10 points)**

**Why this criterion is important:** CareerEdge is working to create a more efficient workforce system to meet the evolving needs of local employers. As examples, this includes improving the occupational training opportunities available to local workers, as well as integrating on-the-job training programs where needed, and improving coordination between education institutions, employers and the public agencies responsible for funding the workforce system.

**What form your response should take:** Two to three paragraphs, limited to 300 words total.

**Scoring Sub-Criteria:**

- + The response highlights and describes labor market conditions, using available data if possible that are impacting your operations. This may include difficulty in finding applicants with the skills and credentials to fill certain job roles.
- + The response describes the deficits or gaps in local educational or occupational skills training programs that impact the quantity or quality of workers or job applicants

**Criterion 5: The impact of your program on the regional workforce system (10 points)**

**Why this criterion is important:** Your program may include innovations that are important to CareerEdge's mission of creating a more efficient workforce system, and if so, CareerEdge wants those innovations to be recognized or potentially replicated elsewhere.

**What form your response should take:** Two paragraphs, limited to 300 words.

**Scoring Sub-Criteria:**

- + The response describes innovations that are embedded within or that may result from your Program, which may include the development of career ladders that map pathways of advancement for certain job roles; new agreements between your organization and one or more of the region's educational institutions; new hybrid programs that include training and work experience; or the design of new curricula for certain job roles.
- + The response confirms your willingness to share "lessons learned" and potential "best practices" with others in the region.

#### **Criterion 6: The design of your Training & Support Program (10 points)**

*Please note – this section should be written ONLY after you have completed the Program Design worksheet in the Program & Budget Workbook (in Excel format). The text you provide here need not repeat the details you provide within the Worksheet; rather, it should focus on the logic and design of your program.*

**Why this criterion is important:** In order for CareerEdge to make an impact in the region, it's important for our Employer Partners to be successful with their Programs. Our Investor Board is interested in funding simple, effective Programs that achieve measurable progress toward CareerEdge goals and objectives.

**What form your response should take:** Two paragraphs, limited to 400 words.

**Scoring Sub-Criteria:**

- + The response describes whether your program uses standard training programs offered by local educational institutions, and if so, whether these programs are tailored, enhanced, or in anyway integrated with work experience, applied laboratory exercises or other types of on-the-job training.
- + The response describes whether your Program results in new agreements or arrangements between your organization and educational institutions or other partners.
- + The response explains how the "Supports" you are offering to your employees help them overcome challenges or barriers to completing your program

#### **Criterion 7: The impact of your program on the lives & careers of employees (20 points)**

**Why this criterion is important:** A primary purpose of CareerEdge is to help low-and-moderate income individuals and families achieve financial self-sufficiency; and a primary means of achieving that purpose is for CareerEdge to help employers develop training & support programs that advance their incumbent workers into higher-skill/higher-wage positions.

**What form your response should take:** Two to three paragraphs, limited to 400 words.

**Scoring Sub-Criteria:**

- + The response provides quantitative indicators of the tangible ways that the proposed program will improve the lives and careers of employees, which may include wage increases (either immediately upon their completion of the proposed training program or within one year), and increases in other forms of remuneration, such as increased access to employer-provided benefits in areas like health and life insurance, dependent care, and pension contributions.
- + The response provides qualitative indicators of the tangible ways that the proposed program will improve the lives and careers of employees, which may include their attainment of new skills, certifications or degrees, or improvements in the flexibility of their work schedules.

#### **Criterion 8: Your "cost-share" in the program (10 points)**

*Please note – this section should be written ONLY after you have completed the Budget in the Program & Budget Workbook (in Excel format). The text you provide here need not repeat the details you provide within the Budget; rather, it should focus on "spelling out" the resources you are investing into your Program.*

**Why this Criterion is important:** The CareerEdge grant investments being seeded into its Employer Partnerships are designed to improve employers' bottom line in two ways:

- + First, the investments are expected to **reduce your costs** by reducing your turnover rates. Many business surveys find that the number one issue facing businesses is *finding and keeping good employees*. Some studies indicate that as much as 75 percent of the demand for new employees is simply to replace workers who leave.
- + Second, the investments can help your organization **increase revenue** by supplying the skilled labor that enables you to expand your products and services, and to increase the quality and market value of those products and services.

The combination of lower costs and increased revenues makes it possible for our Employer Partners to make larger, more sustained investments in the quality of their workforce. Currently, CareerEdge Employer Partners are covering an average 55 percent of their Program costs. CareerEdge expects that "cost-share" to grow to 70 percent in year two of the Partnership, and to as much as 85 percent in year three. The CareerEdge model calls for Employer Partners to graduate from the program in year 4, thenceforth covering 100 percent of the cost of their workforce development programs.

**What form your response should take:** Two paragraphs, limited to 300 words.

**Scoring Sub-Criteria:**

- + The response describes the resources you are investing in your Program, which may include staff and consultant time commitments; free training materials; free training supplies or equipment such as clothing, badges, and instruments; the cost of added supports such as childcare for employees while they complete training; co-payment of third-party training or credentialing costs; or the cost of an in-house trainer/workforce development professional.

**Criterion 9 (BONUS): The "Support" Component of your Program (5 points)**

**Why this criterion is important:** You can earn up to 5 bonus points if your Program incorporates support that increases the likelihood that employees will successfully complete their trainings.

**What form your response should take:** In 400 words or less, please describe and list the types of strategies and supports you will offer your employees before, during or after their trainings, which may include any or all of the following:

- + Flexible training schedules (e.g., nights and weekends)
- + Paid training time or approved, paid work release for training
- + Paid training materials, including text books and supplies
- + Childcare while training or family support services or resources
- + Transportation to or from training
- + Career mentoring or career planning services

## Respondent Profile Form

<b>Company name:</b>			
Year founded:		Publicly traded?	
No. of employees:		No. of employees in Manasota:	
No. of locations:		No. of locations in Manasota:	
Annual revenue 2010/11:		2010/11 revenue growth:	
2010/11 net profit (%):		Annual employee turnover (%):	
10-year avg revenue:		10-year avg revenue growth:	
<b>Contact person for your Employee Training &amp; Support Program</b>			
Name:		Title:	
Address:			
Telephone:		E-mail:	
We are also applying to the Suncoast Workforce Employee Training Program (Y/N):			
<b>Summary of your Employee Training &amp; Support Program</b>			
(please use our sample on page 6 as a guide to develop a brief summary; the box will expand)			