

## AMERICAN MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE FUND

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

January 28, 2026

**DISCLAIMER:** This FAQ is intended to provide information about the American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund (“Incentive Fund”). The portal to apply for incentive funding is now open and may be accessed here: [American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund Application Portal](#). Questions about the Incentive Fund may be directed to: [OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov](mailto:OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov). Please allow 3-5 business days for a response.

#### 1. WHAT IS THE AMERICAN MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIP INCENTIVE FUND?

- The “American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund” (“Incentive Fund”) is managed and operated by the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services, which is 100% funded through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor.
- To address the urgent need to grow and modernize the U.S. manufacturing workforce and in direct response to [Executive Order 14278: Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future](#), to expand access to high-quality Registered Apprenticeship Programs, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services will serve as the lead grantee and convener to establish the Incentive Fund. The Incentive Fund will support the expansion of advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeships nationwide, to include [occupations](#) in Advanced Manufacturing subsectors such as, but not limited to, Aerospace, Automotive, Biotechnology, Maritime Industrial Defense and Shipbuilding, Supply Chain & Automation, Nuclear Energy, and Semiconductors.
- Through an incentive funding model, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services, will motivate sponsors on a national scale to develop, expand, and/or join existing advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeship Programs and hire apprentices.
- Incentive funding will be distributed through a “pay for performance” (sometimes also referred to as “pay for success”) model, where payments are linked to specific performance criteria or predefined outcomes. The Incentive Fund aims to stimulate

innovation and reduce barriers that prevent sponsors from committing to Registered Apprenticeships, thus promoting program scale and sustainability.

## 2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR INCENTIVE FUNDS?

- Eligible Incentive Fund applicants include:
  - Individual Registered Apprenticeship Program sponsors (i.e., apprenticeship programs operated by one business/employer for building its own skilled labor force); and
  - Group sponsors or consortia (i.e., apprenticeship programs operated by groups of employers, unions, industry intermediaries, trade associations, etc.).
  - Applicants may also refer to [U.S. CFR § 29.2](#) for definitions of “Employer” and “Sponsor.”

## 3. WHAT IS REQUIRED OF SPONSORS?

- Eligible sponsors must have an established Registered Apprenticeship Program **at the time of their intake application submission.**
- Eligible apprentices must be:
  - Newly enrolled apprentices;
  - Incumbent workers being up-skilled by their enrollment in an advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeship Program; and/or
  - Former registered apprentices enrolled in a new advanced manufacturing Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- ALL apprentices included in the intake application **must** be enrolled on or after the application submission date.
  - **Please note:** Any apprentices formally registered prior to the application submission date will be deemed ineligible for consideration for incentive payments.
- Sponsors must commit to incentivizing individual employers or groups of employers to hire apprentices in any number of U.S. states, territories, and/or the District of Columbia. Sponsors must maintain apprentice enrollment for a minimum of 90 days with the intent for apprentices to successfully complete the program. **Please note, there are no partial payments.**
- Sponsors must provide current information about total headcount (full-time and part-time equivalent) of the employer or employers that will receive incentive funds.
- Employer partner information must be available in the Registered Apprenticeship Partners Information Data System (RAPIDS) for sponsors of group programs to be

eligible to apply for incentive funding. If the sponsor is in an SAA that does not report in RAPIDS, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services will work with SAA Director to confirm the employer and registered apprenticeship program connection.

- It is the sponsor's responsibility to provide the employer acceptance agreements during the intake application process.
- Sponsors agree to the terms and conditions established in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services, as an individual sponsor or as a group of sponsors (consortia) represented by an authorized lead designee. Sponsors will be provided with a hyperlink to the MOU after their intake application is approved.
- Sponsors who are MOU signatories, either individually or as lead designees for a consortium, are responsible for ensuring accurate entry of program and apprentice data into RAPIDS on behalf of Employers receiving incentive funds, in accordance with the MOU. Refer to **Question 8** for more information.
- Sponsors agree to complete the Grant Disclosure Document. It is provided by the Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services, Office of State Procurement. Sponsors may access this form here: [Contract and Grant Disclosure Form](#).
- Once the intake application is approved, sponsors are required to register as a vendor with Arkansas. The instructions for the vendor set-up are found here: [Arkansas Vendor Set-up Instructions](#). **Please note:** the registration process is 4-6 weeks. Sponsors will receive an Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System (AASIS) vendor ID number once the process is finished.

#### **4. HOW MUCH INCENTIVE FUNDING WILL BE PROVIDED AND WHEN?**

- An incentive amount of \$3,500.00 USD (Three Thousand, Five-Hundred U.S. Dollars) will be awarded to the sponsor (up to 100 apprentices per employer and up to 10 employers per sponsor).
- Payment will not be made until satisfactory completion of an apprentice's 90-day retention period in an eligible Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- Arkansas will verify with SAA states, as needed, that the 90-day retention period has been fulfilled.
- Registered Apprenticeship Program Sponsors can retain up to 10% of the incentive payment, and the remaining 90% or more will be provided to the apprentice's employer(s) by the sponsor who received the payment.

- The sponsor **must** provide at least 90% of the total incentive payment received to the employer and be able to track and validate payment was made to the employer. The sponsor may retain up to 10% of the total incentive payment. During the first six-months of the Incentive Fund **January 28, 2026 – July 31, 2026**, funds may support up to 100 apprentices per employer and up to 10 employers per sponsor.
  - **Please note:** Employer partner information must be available in RAPIDS for sponsors of group programs to be eligible to apply. Please refer to **Question 3** for more information on what is required of sponsors. Based on utilization rates and other early outcomes, these funding caps may be reevaluated and/or removed after July 31, 2026.

## 5. WHEN AND HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDS?

- The application portal is open and may be accessed here: [American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund Application Portal](#).
- Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until 100% of available incentive funds are obligated and in accordance with the pilot phase limitations mentioned in **Question 4** of this FAQ.
- Applicants will receive an automated message confirming the intake application was submitted.

## 6. HOW WILL APPLICATIONS BE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE?

- Application eligibility will be determined based on information included within the [intake application form](#).

## 7. HOW WILL APPLICANTS KNOW IF THEY'VE BEEN APPROVED AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

- Once the intake application form is submitted, please allow for up to 15 business days for review.
- Following approval, an MOU will be drafted and sent for signature via DocuSign.
- If an application is not accepted, official correspondence will be sent by email, notifying the sponsor of the reason(s) for denial and the appeals process.

**8. WHAT ARE RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RECEIPT OF INCENTIVE FUNDS?**

- Sponsors will commit to the goals/mission of the Incentive Fund listed under **Question 1** of this FAQ.
- Sponsors will adhere to all terms and conditions in the MOU, including the mitigation of fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Sponsors will adhere to all required processes and procedures, including the use of RAPIDS, regarding the formal registration of apprentices and/or the registration or modification of existing apprenticeship programs under the jurisdiction of either the Office of Apprenticeship (OA) of the U.S. Department of Labor or the relevant State Apprenticeship Agency as recognized by OA ([CFR § 29.3](#)).
- Sponsors will provide all necessary reporting data in the form of an Excel file (“Performance Reports”) to the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services in accordance with the reporting process and timelines established in the MOU, along with an accompanying invoice before payment is released.
- Sponsors operating in SAA states that do not use RAPIDS as their case management system are encouraged to apply for incentive funding. The Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services will provide direct one-on-one support to SAA states that do not use RAPIDS to prepare and submit their performance reports and invoices.
- Sponsors will adhere to specific requirements regarding the collection, storage, destruction, and overall protection of personal information as well as the exemptions of personal information from disclosure in public records requests.

**9. WHAT IS THE PAYMENT REQUEST/TRANSFER PROCESS?**

- Upon receipt of an invoice and associated Performance Report, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Services will review and approve the amount of incentive funding to be paid.
- Finance Shared Services will process these payments within a period of 10-15 business days.
- If payment is not received after 15 business days, sponsors may be contacted for additional clarification or documentation. Sponsors may follow-up after 15 business days via the following contact email address:

[OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov](mailto:OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov)

**10. WHAT STEPS CAN A SPONSOR TAKE IF AN OCCUPATION IS NOT ON THE APPROVED LIST?**

- During the application process, sponsors will be able to submit a justification on why an occupation should be allowed that is not on the approved list.
- For an occupation to be considered, it must encompass the majority of occupational skills reflected in the relevant O-net code.

**11. NEED ANSWERS TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS NOT COVERED IN THIS FAQ?**

- Email: [OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov](mailto:OSD.MFGfund@arkansas.gov)
- Phone: (501) 682-6546