Los Angeles County
Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) High Road Training Partnership Fund

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Digital Navigators Program

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About this document

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) regarding reopening of the Los Angeles County High Road Training Partnership (HRTP) Fund initiative RFA for a Digital Navigators program. Applicants are encouraged to use this document as a primary reference when seeking clarification on program eligibility, requirements, application instructions, and other related topics on the Digital Navigators program ahead of the application deadline of August 29th, 5:00 PM Pacific Time.

Please also review the [Request for Applications (RFA)](), the [Application Guide](), the [HRTP Fund FAQ](), and the [Understanding HRTPs]() documents available on the website for more information on the HRTP Fund and how to successfully complete an application.

Contents

General Program Information

1. If our organization applied in a previous HRTP Fund cycle and was not selected, can we resubmit our proposal with updates for Digital Navigators program?

Yes. Returning applicants may revise and resubmit their applications in the application portal. Guidance on how to edit previously submitted applications can be found in the [Application Portal FAQs](#) under Question 5. Ensure your updated proposal meets all HRTP Fund and Digital Navigators eligibility requirements and submit it by **Friday, August 29, 2025 at 5:00 PM PT**.

2. Is the Digital Navigators Fund part of an existing HRTP, or is it intended to establish a new HRTP?

The Digital Navigators Fund is part of the broader Los Angeles County High Road Training Partnership (HRTP) Fund initiative, administered by the Department of Economic Opportunity and is not establishing a new program. Applicants do not need to be part of an existing HRTP to apply. The fund is open to both existing HRTPs and newly forming HRTPs:

- **Existing HRTPs** that can demonstrate its alignment with the HRTP framework and are expanding partnerships and/or program scope (Thriving and Growing stage).

- **Newly forming HRTPs** that demonstrate commitment to the HRTP model, and either require funding to complete project design, curriculum development, partnership engagement, **and** pilot a training model, or are ready to implement a new training model. (Piloting or Emerging stage).

In either case, applicants must meet the program's eligibility requirements, deliver on the core components outlined in the Request for Applications (RFA), and fulfill the requirements of their applicable stage. Please reference p. 29 of the [RFA](#) for more details on the *Piloting or Emerging* and *Thriving and Growing* stages.

Application Process

Eligibility: Process Eligibility

3. Are there any pre-application requirements before the August 29 deadline?

No, there are no pre-application requirements. Applicants should ensure that they have fully completed all questions, uploaded any required documents, and have submitted their application successfully by the submission deadline of August 29th, 2025 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time.

Eligibility: Partnership Eligibility

4. Are employer partners required to make formal hiring commitments or guarantee job placement for program participants? Is such a guarantee required in their commitment letters? Should employer commitment letters specify numeric hiring targets?

Specifically for the Digital Navigators Program, we are requiring that at a minimum the employer partner(s) make a formal commitment to interview and consider program participants for placements and that this commitment is captured in the Letter of Support, Commitment or other formal partnership agreement. Employer commitment letters are not required to include numeric hiring targets.

5. Are there existing employer partners committed to interviews or hiring, or should applicants bring their own?

No, there are no employers on hand that are set up to engage with the selected applicant. Applicants are expected to engage employers on their own and must have a signed Letter of Support or Letter of Commitment from all required partners, including at least one employer, at submission. See questions 8.3, 52 and 62 in the HRTP Fund FAQ for more on the difference between a Letter of Support (template here) and Letter of Commitment (template here).

6. What is meant by "a labor or worker representative" in the context of an HRTP partnership? What qualifies an organization to serve in this role?

A *labor or worker representative* is a partner organization that speaks to the concerns and interests of workers and ensures that workforce development strategies are worker-centered. To qualify, the worker representative must:

- Be independent of the partnership's employers.
- Demonstrate a record of meaningful, consistent, and ongoing advocacy of workers' interests.
- Provide representation throughout the life of the project.
- Be an organized entity or in the process of forming one, not an individual worker, and at a minimum, must consist of at least two incumbent workers in the industry of focus.

Worker representatives can include, but are not limited to, labor unions, worker centers, or other worker-led entities that can formally participate in the partnership, provide sustained input, and help ensure accountability to worker perspectives. For more information on worker representatives see question 40 in the HRTP Fund FAQ and RFA Section IV: Applicant Eligibility Criteria – Partnership Requirements and Principles, p. 14-15.

7. What are some examples of non-labor union worker voice organizations?

Suitable non-union worker voice partners include worker advocacy groups, worker centers, and organized worker associations. At a minimum, a non-labor union worker voice representative should take the form of an advisory council of two or more incumbent workers in the industry of focus. For more information on worker representatives see question 40 in the HRTP Fund FAQ and RFA Section IV: Applicant Eligibility Criteria – Partnership Requirements and Principles, p. 14-15.

8. Can a nonprofit organization apply as the lead applicant, or would it be more appropriate to join as a partner? Are there minimum capacity requirements?

Any eligible entity that meets the HRTP Fund's lead applicant criteria may apply as the lead applicant. Lead applicants must have the organizational capacity to manage grant funds, convene required partners (employer, worker representative, training provider), and deliver program outcomes. Smaller organizations that do not yet have the necessary capacity may be more competitive as part of a consortium led by a higher-capacity

convener. Minimum eligibility requirements for all applicants are described in [RFA](#) Section IV: Applicant Eligibility Criteria and in question 3 of the [HRTP Fund FAQ](#).

9. If an organization is located in LA County but operates virtually, is a physical office required?

Partners must be based in LA County and serve LA County residents/businesses. Virtual operations are acceptable if the organization maintains a registered LA County presence. For more information, see question 33 in the [HRTP Fund FAQ](#).

10. Do training providers need to be on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) prior to application, or can they be added post-award?

Training providers are not required to be on the ETPL prior to applying. See question 30 of [the HRTP Fund FAQs](#).

11. How are employer partnerships and training provider qualifications weighted in scoring? Will letters of support from elected officials be factored into scoring?

Applications are evaluated using the scoring rubric in [RFA](#) Section VII (p. 27–28). There is no fixed percentage weight solely for employer versus training provider qualifications. Letters of support from elected officials can strengthen the narrative by demonstrating community backing, but they are not a scored criterion and do not replace required partner commitment letters.

Eligibility: Program Requirements

12. What performance metrics are expected?

Applicants must meet the 85% training completion target for all enrolled participants and 75% target placement rate for participants securing jobs related to program for all enrolled participants. See question 99 in the HRTP Fund FAQ and RFA Section V, p. 23.

13. Is there a preferred training duration or will longer pathways be considered?

While there is no fixed minimum training duration, all training programs must meet both graduation and placement targets within the grant timeline (85% of participants graduating the program and 75% of participants placed in a registered apprenticeship program or

unsubsidized employment). Furthermore, all grant funds must be spent down by October 30, 2026. For more information, see question 80 in the [HRTP Fund FAQs](). For a list of acceptable training models see the [RFA]() Section V.3: Training Model and Supportive Services on p. 22.

14. Is the Digital Navigators Program restricted to tech industry placements, or can participants be placed in other industries where tech skills are used?

This program is looking for a minimum of 50% of participants to be placed in technology roles or roles that require significant digital skills as a core component of the job. If the proposed placements are into roles that incorporate the use of technology as a core component of the job, but are not traditional tech roles, this would require a clear explanation of how the specific digital skills taught in the program will apply to the day to day work in those jobs and increase the individual's earning potential or accelerate their career progression in a meaningful way.

For any deviations from the digital navigators criteria, applicants should ensure their application explains in detail how the program still satisfies all three Digital Navigators components.

15. Would low numbers of participants moving into the tech sector impact an applicant's ability to have a competitive application? How would proposals with a smaller percentage of participants transitioning into tech industry roles be viewed in terms of competitiveness? (e.g., If an applicant on-ramps incumbent workers in a specific occupation into different sectors, and there are limited opportunities in tech-based sectors.)

See the answer to question 14 above. An applicant's competitiveness will depend on how well the proposal meets the HRTP Fund eligibility requirements, all three Digital Navigators requirements, serves historically underserved populations, and demonstrates credible pathways into technology roles as well as meeting all of the overall application criteria.

16. Can the "digital navigator" role be adapted to include industry-specific components, such as maritime technology?

Yes, applicants may tailor the Digital Navigator role to meet the needs of specific industries or communities, provided the program meets all three required criteria: (1) equip

participants with technology skills and industry-recognized credentials, (2) provide on-the-job training to serve communities with limited technological access, and (3) create pathways into quality technology jobs. Industry-specific components are allowable if these core requirements are met.

17. Are there preferred certifications or career pathways that the DEO recommends for participants? Must all training modules result in industry-recognized credentials, or can some be skills-focused without certification?

This program does not require a single preferred certification or career pathway. However, all funded Digital Navigators programs must equip participants with technology skills and/or industry-recognized credentials that lead to High Road technology jobs. Examples of acceptable certifications and pathways are listed in the [Digital Navigator RFA Rider](#) and include but are not limited to:

- CompTIA A+, Network+, Security+, or CYSA+
- Cisco certifications
- GIS, IT support, broadband infrastructure, or cybersecurity coursework
- Digital literacy training, including computing, online safety, and productivity tools

Programs may propose other credentials or pathways that do not lead to industry-recognized credentials if they are relevant to the needs of the communities served and align with the HRTP Fund's eligibility requirements. Applicants must demonstrate in their application how training that does not lead to credential attainment will still help participants secure quality jobs.

18. Which populations are priority for the Digital Navigators re-release?

Programs must serve at least two historically underserved populations (e.g., low-income residents, immigrants & refugees, opportunity youth, justice-involved individuals, older workers, and veterans). For more information on target populations, see [RFA](#) Section IV: Applicant Eligibility Criteria – Target population p. 18-19.

19. Can we include wraparound services (e.g., stipends, childcare, transportation) in our model?

Yes. Comprehensive supportive services, including training stipends, are expected as part of a High Road training model to remove barriers and improve completion and placement.

For more information on support services see RFA Section V: HRTP Applicant Scope of Work – Case Management and Supportive Services: p. 18-19, and Attachment A. Eligible support services.

20. Should our program be countywide or focused on specific underserved regions?

For the Digital Navigators Program, applicants should ensure that they serve participants in the Highest, High, and Moderate need geographies according to LA County Equity Explorer's Covid-19 Vulnerability and Recovery index with a target of at least 40% from highest, 35% from high, 20% moderate, and no more than 3% low and 2% lowest COVID-19 need tiers. Please see the P*riority Geographic Areas* section on page 18 of the RFA for more details.

21. How many participants are expected for the November 2025–October 2026 grant period?

The application does not have a required or competitive number of participants per program. Proposals should set realistic participant targets aligned to budget and capacity and be consistent with meeting HRTP performance goals (85% training completion; 75% placement across all program participants). For more information see question 82 in the HRTP Fund FAQ.

22. Should OJT be paid? Who secures placements? Can nonprofits host OJT?

Yes, all OJT should be paid. While OJT is not the only format permitted, the Digital Navigators Program does require a hands-on training component, such as occupational training, paid transitional work, OJT, or other work-based learning experiences, to meet job quality goals. For more information see question 5 in the in the HRTP Fund FAQ and RFA Section V: HRTP Applicant Scope of Work – Training Model and Supportive Services, p. 22.

Please see this resource for a formal definition of OJT. OJT is defined as paid, short-term training provided by an employer to a new hire, where the employer pays the regular wage of the participant and is reimbursed for a portion of those wages (typically around 50%) during the onboarding and training period. This serves as an incentive for employers to hire and invest in training. Participants must be hired as permanent employees for OJT to apply.

Nonprofits may host OJT if they meet these criteria. Applicants are responsible for securing their own OJT placements.

23. Is a post-grant sustainability plan required?

A formal post-grant sustainability plan is not required. However, to the extent that such plans exist, applicants are recommended to provide this information. There is an optional question, Question 16 (see Fund Application Questions), which asks applicants to "elaborate on the status of partner commitment to engage and work together throughout the grant term and beyond."

24. What participant demographic and outcome data will the selected grantee be required to collect, and are standard reporting templates provided?

Grantees will be required to collect participants' personally identifiable information (PII), in accordance with Dalberg's guidelines which will be provided during contracting stage and California state's Employment Development Department Privacy Policy. Grantees will also be required to collect outcomes (e.g., participant placement, wages, and program graduation). Standard templates for monthly and quarterly reporting will be provided as well as guidance for data entry into the CalJOBS system. See HRTP Fund FAQ questions 115 and 148 and the RFA Section IX. Reporting and Evaluation Page 30 for more information.

25. Must all trainers and participants be WIOA-eligible?

No. Trainers and participants are not required to be WIOA-eligible to participate in the Digital Navigators program. Furthermore, there is no requirement that any of the partners be WIOA-affiliated. Note: Although participants are not required to be WIOA-eligible for this grant/program, this may impact referrals to WIOA-funded programs.

Funding and Compliance

26. Are there limits on administrative and/ or indirect costs or limits on participant support funds? Is there a budget template?

Administrative costs in general are not capped for this grant. However the combined total of indirect administrative costs and indirect program costs is capped at 10% of the requested funding amount, unless the applicant has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA) above 10%. Use the provided budget request template in the portal to submit

your budget. While there is no fixed cap on participant support; all costs must be reasonable, necessary, and well-justified.

27. Are matching funds required, and if so, what percentage is expected?

No, there is no matching funds requirement for applicants to be eligible for the HRTP Fund, see question 118 in the [HRTP Fund FAQ](#).

28. As the lead fiscal agent, are there any restrictions on distributing funds to partner colleges or employers?

The lead fiscal agent may distribute funds to partner colleges, employers, or other organizations, provided costs are allowable and all partners are located in LA County and in good standing. Please note that any funds from the HRTP Fund shall not be used to pay profits of any organizations in the HRTP. For more information, see questions 3.1 and 121 in the [HRTP Fund FAQ](#).

29. How is the grant funded? Does the grant awardee receive a lump sum or is it paid out in segments?

HRTP programs will be funded using Los Angeles County funds. Funds are disbursed only on a reimbursement basis, upon submission and approval of monthly reports and invoices. For more information see questions 113, 145, and 146 in the [HRTP Fund FAQs](#).

30. Can grant funds be used for participant stipends, laptops, and transportation assistance?

Yes, grant funds may be used for training materials and resources such as laptops, training stipends, and supportive services such as transportation assistance as well as many other program-related and administrative costs. For a full list of what HRTP Funds can and cannot be used for, please see questions 112 and 114 in the [HRTP Fund FAQs](#).

Timeline

31. When does the 12-month Digital Navigators grant term begin and end? Is it a rolling start basis?

The Digital Navigator Program grant term runs **from November 3, 2025 through October 30, 2026**. Selected grantees must execute grant agreements by **October 31, 2025**. (See [HRTP Fund Overview page 4](#)). The term is not on a rolling start basis, the selected grantee will be expected to comply with the grant term as outlined.

Applicant Support

32. Will you have another info session (I see some information sessions already occurred in April)? Will there be office hours with UCLA Labor Center?

Information sessions and virtual office hours were held in April and May to provide additional guidance on the HRTP Fund, eligibility, and the application process. Recordings and slides for all sessions are available on the [HRTP Fund website](#). There are no additional office hours or information sessions that will be held for this specific reopening of the HRTP Fund. We suggest applicants review those recordings, as the information on the HRTP Fund and application is fully captured in those sessions.