

DRPT APPRENTICESHIP RESOURCE GUIDE

Overview

Apprenticeship programs provide an opportunity to develop a dedicated workforce customized to an agency's specific needs. However, apprenticeship programs can involve many different types of costs, including curriculum development, compensation for trainers, and tuition at community colleges, which are not eligible expenses under DRPT's grant program (**Table 1**). This guide provides a summary of state and federal funding opportunities for apprenticeship programs, the types of expenses they can support, and the types of apprenticeship programs that are eligible.

Table 1: Apprenticeship Funding Opportunities

Expense	DRPT	DEPARTMENT OF LABOR		FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION		FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
		Direct Federal Grants	VDWDA* Grants	Low-or-No Emission Vehicle Program	Bus and Bus Facilities Program	NEVI
Program Recruitment				Via 5% workforce development funding	Via 5% workforce development funding	
Apprenticeship Participant Wages and Benefits	Yes	Yes	Yes	Via 5% workforce development funding	Via 5% workforce development funding	
Apprenticeship Staff Wages and Benefits		Yes	Yes	Via 5% workforce development funding	Via 5% workforce development funding	
Apprenticeship Participant Tuition		Yes	Yes	Via 5% workforce development funding	Via 5% workforce development funding	Potentially in the future**
Development of Curriculum		Yes	Yes			Potentially in the future**
Construct Facilities					Yes	
Purchase Vehicles				Yes	Yes	

* Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works).

** National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) funding is distributed to states by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to support installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charging stations, including training opportunities for associated workforce development. VDOT is collaborating with the Virginia Community College system (VCCS) to identify opportunities for NEVI funding to incorporate EV Charging and Maintenance education into existing VCCS electrical programs. For more, see the section on NEVI.

Funding Sources

Department of Rail and Public Transportation

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provides funding for apprenticeship programs through the Public Transportation Workforce Development grant. Potential funding applications include apprenticeship participant wages and costs, including training certifications, tuition, and any associated travel. This state funding can cover up to 80 percent of eligible expenses and may supplement federal funding. For additional information, please review the DRPT Grant Programs website¹.

Department of Labor: Registered Apprenticeship Program Funding

Registered apprenticeship programs meet criteria from federal and/or state governments and provide programs combining classroom instruction with on-the-job training. Upon completion of the program, participants receive a nationally recognized credential. Transit agencies can sponsor their own apprenticeship programs; partners organizations, including unions, educational institutions, and workforce intermediaries, can also sponsor apprenticeships.

In Virginia, the Virginia Department of Workforce Development & Advancement (VDWDA), also known as Virginia Works, oversees the registered apprenticeship program. Local Virginia Works field offices helps sponsors meet state standards for registered apprenticeship programs.² Apprenticeships may also choose to register through VDWDA with the Department of Labor by meeting federal standards³.

Direct Federal Grants

Apprenticeship programs registered with Virginia Works are eligible to apply for discretionary funding opportunities through the federal Office of Apprenticeships. The availability of funding fluctuates over time, and grants are often restricted to specific industries, types of expenses, and applicant characteristics. In addition, the Department of Labor's grant opportunities may exclude public sector apprenticeships, though the Office of Apprenticeships may modify this restriction from time to time. Transit agencies should reach out to the grant contacts for more information. To determine whether transit apprenticeships are eligible for grant opportunities, agencies should contact the grant contact listed in the Federal Register notice. Currently available funding opportunities are available on the Department of Labor website.⁴

VDWDA Funding Opportunities

Virginia Works also periodically distributes funding to apprenticeship programs. At time of writing, VDWDA does not have any open apprenticeship grant opportunities, but VDWDA representatives expect additional

¹ DRPT Grant Programs

www.drpt.virginia.gov/our-grant-programs/making-efficient-and-responsible-investments-in-transit-merit/

² Registered Apprenticeship Program – State of Virginia Standards

www.doli.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Minimum-Standards-July-1-2018.pdf

³ Registered Apprenticeship Program – Federal standards

www.apprenticeship.gov/about-us/legislation-regulations-guidance

⁴ Department of Labor funding opportunities

www.apprenticeship.gov/investments-tax-credits-and-tuition-support/open-funding-opportunities

funding to become available in the future. VDWD is applying for additional funding. Additional information is available on the Virginia Works website.⁵

When available, Virginia Works may distribute funding in a variety of ways, including as a direct grant, reimbursement, tax credit, formula-based contribution matching. Grant funding for apprenticeships may be available to sponsors, provided to agencies directly, or utilized by organizations in partnership with these agencies. Sample uses of funding, including funding for potential agency partners, are provided in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Sample Funding Uses of Department of Labor Grants

POTENTIAL USE OF INCENTIVES	RECIPIENT
Apprenticeship Participant Wages Apprenticeship Participant Tuition Apprenticeship Staff Wages	Employer (e.g., Transit Agencies)
Apprenticeship Technical Instruction Development of Technical Instruction Curriculum	Education Entities (e.g., Community Colleges)
Employer and Apprentice Participant Recruitment Supportive Services	Workforce Development Boards Community Based Organizations Intermediaries (non-state entities, i.e., unions, non-profits, etc.)

Federal Transit Administration

Some funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), including the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program and the Low or No Emission Competitive Program, includes dedicated workforce development funding which can apply to apprenticeships.

For both programs, zero-emission project recipients are required to use five percent of the amount for zero-emission workforce development activities. This funding is in addition to the requested capital expenses. For instance, if an agency provides \$200,000 of project funding and receives \$800,000 of federal funding, and additional \$50,000 would be provided for workplace development.

Workforce development funding may have several applications.

- Employment training programs (including apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and instructional training)
- Employment outreach programs
- Supportive Services to assist individuals in completion of training

⁵ Virginia Works website
www.viriniaworks.gov

(Clarifying information is available on the FTA website⁶)

An additional 0.5 percent of the funding request may be allocated for training at the National Transit Institute (NTI). The workforce development funding, like all FTA grant funding, is available only to designated federal recipients and subrecipients.

Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program

The Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program provides funding to states and direct recipients to replace, rehabilitate, and construct buses and bus-related facilities, including modifications for low or no emission vehicles and facilities. Additional information about the program is available on the FTA website.⁷

Low or No Emission Grant Program

The Low or No Emission Grant Program provides funding to state and local governmental authorities for the acquisition of zero-emission and low-emission transit buses and related facilities. Additional information about the program is available on the FTA website.⁸

Comparison of FTA Programs

An applicant may submit a project to both the Low or No Emission Grant Program and the Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program. If a project submitted for consideration under both programs receives funding, FTA will exercise its discretion to determine under which program the project will receive funding. A comparison between the programs is detailed in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Comparison of Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Program and Low- or No-Emission Vehicle Grant Program

		BUS FACILITIES	LOW OR NO
Authorized Funding Total for FY2024 (in millions)		\$393	\$1,124
Vehicle Type		All	Low or No Emissions
Vehicle Replacement	Buses	Yes	
Rehabilitation	Buses	Yes	
	Related Equipment	Yes	
	Facilities	Yes	
Acquisition (Purchase or Lease)	Buses	Yes	Yes
	Related Equipment	Yes	
	Facilities	Yes	Yes
Workforce Development Funding		For agencies acquiring zero-emission vehicles: 5%	For agencies acquiring zero-emission vehicles: 5%

⁶ FTA clarification for supportive services
www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/federal-transit-administration-faqs-supportive-services

⁷ FTA overview of Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities program
www.transit.dot.gov/bus-program

⁸ FTA overview of Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Program
www.transit.dot.gov/lowno

	BUS FACILITIES	LOW OR NO
	Additional 0.5% for training at National Transit Institute	Additional 0.5% for training at National Transit Institute

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) funding is distributed to states by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to support installation and maintenance of electric vehicle charging stations, potentially including training opportunities for associated workforce development. In Virginia, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) coordinates requests for and distribution of NEVI funding and intends to distribute over \$100 million over the next four years. In March 2024, VDOT awarded an initial \$11.3 million investment under Phase 1-A of the NEVI Program to supporting installation of fueling stations throughout Alternative Fuel Corridors. VDOT is collaborating with the Virginia Community College system (VCCS) to identify opportunities for NEVI funding to incorporate EV Charging and Maintenance education into existing VCCS electrical programs. Information about upcoming rounds of competitive award solicitations is available on VDOT’s NEVI program website.⁹

Other Federal Agencies

Federal agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Energy (DOE) provide funding opportunities for projects related to clean energy and transportation. These grants typically have a short application window and are not reauthorized. Examples of previous grants with an applicable workforce development and training component include EPA Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program¹⁰ and the DOE 2024 Technology Integration Funding¹¹.

To review currently available grant opportunities, visit the EPA¹² and DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)¹³ websites.

⁹ VDOT NEVI Program
www.publicinput.com/VirginiaNEVI

¹⁰ EPA Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program
www.epa.gov/clean-heavy-duty-vehicles-program/clean-heavy-duty-vehicles-grant-program

¹¹ DOE Technology Integration Funding Opportunity
www.energy.gov/eere/vehicles/articles/funding-notice-fiscal-year-2024-technology-integration-funding-opportunity

¹² EPA funding opportunities
www.epa.gov/grants

¹³ DOE EERE funding opportunities
www.energy.gov/eere/funding/eere-funding-opportunities