

# Competitive Edge Training (CETA) Award Guidelines

Looking for Training Resources? LOOK TO US! **POLK WORKS** offers a variety of solutions to meet your business needs. Applying for a Polk Works Competitive Edge Training Award allows you access to thousands of dollars to train your current employees if your application is approved. You choose the training that meets your needs, builds your workforce's skills and impacts your bottom line; you could receive up to 50% of your direct training costs reimbursed. Apply today, awards go fast!

## Guidelines

To determine if you are eligible to receive a Competitive Edge Training Award, review these guidelines and if you meet the requirements, complete the attached application or go to our website at [www.polkworks.org](http://www.polkworks.org) and download the application. Send the completed application electronically to Polk Works' Business Services Division at [workforce2020@polkworks.org](mailto:workforce2020@polkworks.org) at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of training.

## What are the award's timeline and structure?

Your organization is eligible to apply for a Competitive Edge Training Award from June 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup>. An agreement or multiple agreements with an individual employer can be funded. The average cost to Polk Works for the training provided to each employee will be considered by Polk Works in the application review process. The Competitive Edge Training application must be received at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of the training. Funds are limited and they will be awarded to local employers on a first come first serve basis, so get your application in quickly.

## Who can apply?

Employers that meet all of the following criteria are eligible to apply for a Competitive Edge Training Award.

1. Employers in the private, for-profit sector, private, not-for-profit, non-profit, local governments, or public agencies;
2. Employers must have business located in Polk County; and
3. Employers must have at least two full-time employees.
4. Employers that are current on all state and local tax obligations

## What will be required of the Employer?

1. As part of the application process your company must provide us your Federal ID number.
2. Your organization must identify the type of training needed, the training vendor best suited to provide that training, the cost for the training and, once the application is approved and the agreement executed by Polk Works; schedule the training for your employees.
3. **The CEO, COO, Human Resources Director, or comparable company officer must sign off on the application and agree to the subsequent releasing of employee information before the agreement can be executed.**
4. Your organization must agree to pay the employee their wages if training occurs during their normal working hours.
5. Your organization must be willing to release wage information for all employees participating in training on the Competitive Edge Application.
6. Your company must ensure that all employees to be trained under an agreement resulting from this application complete all registration forms and have the required documentation before the contract is signed and executed. Polk Works' Business Service Consultants will provide you with the necessary forms.
7. You must take steps to ensure that the training begins within 45 days from the date the agreement is executed by Polk Works or your organization must reapply for funding. Training must be completed within six months from the date Polk Works executes the agreement unless a waiver is obtained in writing from

Polk Works. All awards will be reviewed on a quarterly basis, those where training has not begun may be rescinded.

8. Your organization must require selected employees to attend and complete the training once scheduled. Voluntary attendance at training is problematic and will not be approved.
9. Your company must agree to allow Polk Works to announce and promote your receipt of the award, including your company name, the amount of the award, the number of employees to be trained, the type of training and your contribution to the training cost. Note, Polk Works does not sell employer contact information.

### **Who can be trained?**

1. Employees must work in Polk County the majority of time.
2. Employees must be authorized to work in the United States (I-9 information).
3. Males must be registered for selective service.
4. Employees in the training program must be at least 18 years old, willing to complete and sign a program application and provide necessary documentation.
5. Employees must work a minimum of 20 hours a week.

### **What type of training is authorized?**

This award must be spent on training that develops employees' specific occupational skills that will then contribute to your organization's ability to compete in the market or if your organization is a non-profit or a public agency, to effectively deliver the services expected by your constituents. This training should also improve the opportunities for the employees trained to keep their jobs, advance within the company, receive a wage increase, and gain additional skills.

The training must lead to an industry-recognized certificate/credential or nationally recognized certificate/credential where a skill standard has been achieved. All programs of training provided by a public education agency such as a community college, university or vocational center, meet this requirement. If your organization plans to use another type of training vendor, Polk Works will work with you to help you determine if the certificate that will be issued meets this requirement.

### **What will be paid for?**

If your organization's application is approved and Polk Works executes an agreement with your company, the award will cover up to 50% of the training costs. Training costs may include tuition, textbooks, and other training materials. Your organization must pay the remaining costs of training through a cash match.

### **How will I know if our organization is selected to receive an award?**

A Polk Works WorkForce 2020 representative will contact you once the completed application is reviewed and notify you if your training program is approved for funding and what the total agreement dollar amount will be.

### **What are the next steps once our organization is selected?**

The next step after you have been notified by Polk Works that your application is approved is for you to ensure your trainees complete their registration forms. A Business Service Representative will contact you to arrange a meeting to and sign the agreement package. Your approved training award will remain valid for 45 business days so your commitment to move forward as soon as possible after the agreement is approved is critical. Polk Works WorkForce 2020 will assist you to prepare this short document with its attachments, which will include the application you would have already completed.

Once the agreement is fully executed by Polk Works, you can only receive reimbursement under this agreement for employees that complete the registration process, meet the eligibility requirements and complete the training.

Once the agreement is executed by Polk Works and the employee registration process is completed, your employees' training can begin. Training must be completed, including any post-tests for certification purposes, within six months from the Polk Works signature date on the executed agreement.

### **How do I receive the reimbursement?**

You will be reimbursed for training costs incurred for training up to the amount of the award. You will be required to pay for the cost of training up front and then submit an invoice to Polk Works for reimbursement of those costs for every employee that successfully completes the training. The information required for reimbursement includes:

1. A completed and signed invoice, template to be provided by Polk Works.
2. A copy of the certificate/s attained, transcripts from the training vendor showing successful completion of training and certificate awarded, or a letter from the training vendor stating the employee successfully completed the training and was certified must be submitted with the invoice to verify that the employee completed the training and was certified. Polk Works will not be able to reimburse training costs for anyone who drops out or otherwise does not complete the training.
3. Verification that you were billed and that you paid for the training – Polk Works will need a copy of the bill from the training vendor and your check/payment receipt.

Invoices must be submitted within 60 days from the date of completion of each training course. It is not necessary to wait until all training included in your agreement is completed to submit an invoice if your agreement includes cycles of different trainings that start and end at staggered times.

### **If I don't submit an application now, will there be other opportunities?**

As was stated earlier, this program is ongoing but don't delay – the funding budgeted usually is spent quickly. If you need help formulating training goals or designing a program, we will be happy to assist you. Reminder: your Competitive Edge Training application must be received at least two (2) weeks prior to the training.

### **Who do I call with questions?**

Please contact Polk Works' Business Services Division at 863-508-1600 Ext. 1102 or email us at [workforce2020@polkworks.org](mailto:workforce2020@polkworks.org).