

Alcoa Foundation

Direct Service Grant

Guidance and Example Answers

Organization Information

What is your organization's **mission and vision**?

Guidance: Mission is what you do, and vision is the end state you wish to achieve. The best mission and vision statements are short and clear. Describe how your mission gives you focus and guides your actions and decisions.

Example: *The Iowa Community College Foundation (ICCF) mission is to provide accessible quality educational programs and services to meet personal and community needs and expectations. Our vision is for a community where all people are able to enjoy a productive and meaningful quality of life. We use our mission and vision not only to decide what programs we offer and to whom, but also to incorporate the aspects of both productivity and quality of life into our students' goals and the curriculum we offer.*

Initiative Details

Short Title for this Initiative

Guidance: Provide a title for the initiative for which you are requesting funding. The title should be no longer than ten words. NOTE: Title should not contain the name of the organization.

Example: *Quad City Employment Upgrade Program*

More Descriptive Summary of this Initiative

Guidance: Provide a brief description of the project for which you seek support, including the overall goal of the project, use of Alcoa Foundation funds, total anticipated number of people or places to be served and geography served by the project. Limit your description to no more than 500 words.

Example: Our program will work with 30 qualified candidates between the fall and spring semesters to help them obtain the necessary skills to qualify for an advanced position in the local Quad Cities manufacturing community. Alcoa Foundation funds will assist with the marketing, enrollment testing and both pre- and post-training for each candidate. In addition, funds will be allocated to assist each candidate with post-completion job placement services.

Participants and Results

What is the **community need or issue this initiative will address** during the grant period?

Guidance: State the challenge or problem you are trying to address in clear terms as it is experienced by the community (described as people or places) which is affected. Focus on the set of people, organizations or environmental elements in the geographic area you serve to explain the community issues that support the need for the proposed project. If your program is designed to impact a geographic site or sites rather than a population of people -- as in a land reclamation project -- describe the place(s) here and in the following questions.

How are the characteristics of the people or places you will reach directly through this project different from the full set of people or places who are facing this issue within the larger community you serve?

Example: An ongoing concern in the local Quad Cities community is that many low-income and/or minority students do not perform well in school, which has a negative impact on their ability to obtain quality jobs and life opportunities. There is currently a documented 15-point gap between overall Quad Cities' high school student achievement rates in the last ten years compared to all other low-income and/or minority students in our state. Many former at-risk students get married and have children early in life increasing their need for stable income and reducing the time available for ongoing academic or technical training. Many do not have or use a budget and live paycheck to paycheck in order to pay the bills and feed the family. The proposed program will give those former at-risk students who have not obtained or qualified for good jobs in the manufacturing sector a second chance to build their academic, management and life skills. Our primary focus is on potentially qualified workers over the age of 23 who were identified as "at-risk" students during their high school careers due to low socio-economic or minority status and who do not currently have the skills or job training to enable them to obtain higher level manufacturing positions for companies within the Quad Cities community. Most of them are still in entry level jobs or jobs that require only basic technical, organizational or interpersonal skills. Less than 2% have management or leadership

skills or experience. A prevailing attitude for many is a sense of ‘this is as good as it gets’, and they have had little inspiration or encouragement from others to move up in life.

What are the **measurable results that you hope to achieve** from this initiative for the **primary** participants? (people, communities or organizations)

Guidance: In considering this type of investment, we look for a clear link to the Alcoa Foundation results you selected at the beginning of the application. Then we look to see how many people or places will achieve the desired result you selected by the end of the grant period. A strong program result must be clear, specific and verifiable, and make a direct contribution towards the results sought by Alcoa Foundation.

Strong Program Results:

- Describe a clear and verifiable change in behavior or condition for people or places after they have completed a program or project
- Clearly goes far enough with people or places to easily be counted toward the foundation result it is intended to contribute to
- Are set at a reasonable level (# to achieve the result) given the participant barriers and amount of service/interaction being offered
- Reflect a single statement of change for the core participant group or place.

[Click here for a guide sheet to help you create a strong result statement.](#)

Example: *By the end of the 2012 school year, at least 10 out of the 15 participating students will have successfully completed training and will be accepted into new higher level manufacturing positions.*

What are the **key elements and activities of this initiative** that are critical to achieve the stated results?

Guidance: Your project should reflect a coherent strategy to achieve a result. Tell us the key elements of your project that must be in place for you to succeed with those you serve. Be sure to include the essential elements and the general structure that must be in place and how much interaction is required throughout the project to ensure success.

Example: The Iowa Community College Fund will conduct a focus group of local manufacturing companies to identify gaps in workplace and skill development needs of the target population. Leveraging lessons learned from the focus group, a ten-week curriculum will be developed, including format and participant assessment tools.

The program will be marketed to recruit participants at local manufacturing businesses with a goal of enrolling 15 students per semester. In addition to in-class studies, students will be assigned an educational career counselor who will coach students on applying lessons learned in an effort to further their careers and obtain a higher level manufacturing position.

Students will attend class three nights a week for two hours each session over the ten weeks and will have at least one 1-on-1 counseling session by phone or in person every other week to help them stay on track. Each student enrolled will be tested prior to beginning the ten-week program and will set goals based on this assessment with their counselor. Successful graduation is based on achieving at least 60% of those goals and demonstrating the new skills they have obtained both in the program and in at least one other setting (work or home). In class students will work with the whole group and in pairs to problem solve, role play and develop specific skills. Topics will include time management, process management, communication and interpersonal skills. Additional topics will be developed based on the focus group results obtained at the beginning of the project. ICCF will work with local businesses to develop promotion criteria, timing and opportunities for employees who successfully graduate from the program.

How will you 'track to success' during the grant period? This includes defining 3 - 5 **key milestones** you will use to manage progress, the **critical project steps** you or others will take to help participants accomplish each milestone, and a **timeline** of when each milestone will be achieved. **Note: All milestones should occur within the grant period.**

Guidance: A strong answer to this section includes:

1. **milestones** that clearly reflect 3 - 4 key progress points that the participants need to achieve in order to be 'on track' to reach the project results (e.g. participants enroll, they demonstrate new skills, they use skills on their own, they achieve the program target)
2. **critical steps** that include only the major activities that are required to move the organization or participants to each progress point (e.g. provide outreach, provide training, provide 1:1 counseling, provide follow-up and verification)

3. a clear **IF - THEN** relationship between a major project activity and the milestone that defines success for that activity (e.g. IF we provide outreach, THEN at least 100 new participants will enroll in the program)
4. a **timeline** that reflects when a milestone will be accomplished - not when the activity will be implemented.

[Click here for a workbook to help you create a strong set of steps and milestones.](#)

Example:

- 1) *Develop course outline aimed at closing gaps of target population in workplace and skill development and present to ten local manufacturing companies.*
Milestone: *At least six local manufacturing companies will participate in focus groups to confirm gaps in workplace and skill development and agree to consider promotions for employees who graduate (June-July '12).*
- 2) *Work with head of department, professors and manufacturing company representatives to develop and finalize curriculum.*
Milestone: *Curriculum completed and educators demonstrate their ability to deliver the new material (July '12).*
- 3) *Market to and recruit students from each of the focus group participating companies and other local manufacturing facilities.*
Milestone: *At least 15 students will enroll for the fall semester (August-September '12).*
- 4) *Deliver the first ten-week series and meet with four manufacturing companies to identify job opportunities for graduates.*
Milestone: *At least ten students will successfully graduate and at least two companies will identify clear job opportunities for their employees (September '12-January '13).*
- 5) *Provide counseling for fall semester graduates and deliver the second ten-week series.*
Milestone: *At least 12 students will successfully graduate (January – May '13).*

How will you know when this initiative's results have been achieved? What information or evidence will be used to **verify success**?

Direct Service Application – Guidance and Examples

Guidance: Verification is easier and less costly than evaluation. Explain how you will confirm that results were achieved. Keep it as simple as possible and look to methods that are low effort and low cost. You may be able to use existing data sources or rely on existing measuring instruments. You may also be able to use observations and reports by others or in some cases, self-reported behaviors.

Example: *Course completion will be tracked by the educators and school registrar for students who obtain a “certificate of completion” by successfully demonstrating the new skills they have learned in at least two settings (in class and at work or home). In addition, each student will be assigned a career counselor who will work with them during and after the training sessions. The counselors will confirm the change in job status by obtaining employee pay stubs or new job assignment announcements and/or call the employer to confirm the status change when other documentation is not available.*