

FY27 APEX Center Planning Grant Application

I. Purpose of the Funding:

The Applied Professional Education Experience (APEX) Center Grant Program provides funding to local education agencies (LEAs) to create new or expand existing APEX Centers, as defined below, to provide profession-based learning experiences through partnerships with local industry, businesses, and community organizations. Allowable planning activities include:

- Feasibility studies
- Stakeholder engagement
- Labor market analysis
- Creating the initial program design and rollout
- Teacher and staff training specific to the delivery of profession-based learning

A total of \$2 million will be earmarked for planning grants.

II. Definitions:

- **APEX Center:** (as outlined in Utah Code Annotated § 53F-5-224) A program or facility operated by an LEA that:
 - Provides learning experiences and instruction that replicate professional environments and workplace practices.
 - Provides profession-based learning experiences by partnering with local industry, business, and community organizations to develop and implement student projects that address specific needs or objectives identified by those partners.
 - Aligns programs with high-skill, high-demand career pathways and postsecondary education opportunities.
 - Incorporates industry-standard tools, technologies, and methods into instruction and student work.
 - Prioritizes student activities and profession-based learning projects to build durable professional skills aligned with industry standards and needs.
 - Facilitates mentorship and participation by industry professionals to guide a student and evaluate the student's work.
 - Includes an Advisory Board composed of industry, postsecondary, and community representatives to review program direction and ensure alignment with workforce needs.
 - Establishes programs or activities that address gaps in training or resources within the local or regional workforce.
- **Durable Skills:** [Durable Skills](#) are essential, transferable competencies that empower students to thrive in academic, career, and civic life. These skills are foundational to Utah's vision for preparing students not only for academic success but also for meaningful participation in the workforce and society, these skills include:

- Adaptability: Resilience in the face of challenges and the ability to adjust to changing environments.
- Collaboration: Working effectively with diverse individuals to achieve shared goals.
- Communication: Exchanging ideas clearly across various contexts and media.
- Innovation: Applying creativity and critical thinking to solve problems and evaluate solutions.
- Leadership: Inspiring and guiding others toward a common purpose.
- Professionalism: Demonstrating integrity, respect, and accountability in personal and professional interactions.
- **Unwarranted Duplication:** For the purposes of this application, unwarranted duplication includes not only similar programs or facilities, but also programs that serve overlapping student populations or labor markets within reasonable geographic proximity, unless a clear access, capacity, or workforce gap is demonstrated.
- **Eligible Recipients:**
 - Applications must be submitted from the LEA and not an individual school. LEAs include school districts, charter schools, and the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
 - Applications from LEAs whose CTE carryforward funds exceed the total requested amount will be funded only after all other recommended applications have been funded..

III. Executive Summary and Signatures Form:

This section should be completed on the Executive Signatures and Summary form.

- A. Name of LEA:
- B. LEA Address:
- C. LEA Contact Person (Name and Title):
- D. LEA Contact Person Email:
- E. LEA Contact Person Phone Number:
- F. Superintendent Name:
- G. Date of Application:
- H. Grant Category Applying For:
Planning grant
- I. Total Grant Funding Requested:
- J. Grant Duration: **June 30, 2027**
- K. Executive Summary: **5 points**
 - a. Briefly describe the proposed project and its goals.

IV. Project Narrative: **110 points**

The total narrative should be limited to a **maximum of 6 pages** (not including required attachments). Please be clear and concise in your responses.

- 1. Workforce Needs and Program Alignment: 10 points**
 - 1.1. Identify gaps in local workforce development activities and describe how profession-based learning could address those gaps. Applicants may consider existing technical college or regional workforce training programs when identifying gaps to ensure coordination and to avoid duplicative facilities or programs. **(5 points)**
 - 1.2. **(Attachment Required)** Explain the alignment with the LEA's Strategic Plan. Attach relevant portions of the LEA's Strategic Plan. **(5 points)**
- 2. Proposed APEX Center Model: 35 points**
 - 2.1. **Proposed Planning Activities:** Describe which of the allowable planning activities will be utilized and the expected outcomes for each activity. **(20 points)**
 - 2.2. **(Attachment Required)** Provide a detailed timeline for all planning activities. Include the projected date for full implementation of the project. **(10 points)**
 - 2.3. Describe how industry will be integrated into the planning process to ensure ongoing alignment with evolving workforce needs. As applicable, applicants may include postsecondary institutions, such as technical colleges and degree-granting institutions, in the planning process. **(5 points)**
- 3. Partnerships and Collaboration: 15 points**
 - 3.1. List and describe existing and planned partnerships with industry and postsecondary institutions, including technical colleges and degree-granting institutions, as applicable. Explain how partnerships maintain the industry relevance of programs, ensure alignment to workforce needs, prevent unwarranted duplication of programs, facilities, or equipment, and support postsecondary transitions for students. **(12 points)**
 - 3.2. Describe how the LEA CTE Director collaborated on the development and review of this grant application, and how their input was incorporated into the final submission. **(3 points)**
- 4. Career Readiness: 10 points**
 - 4.1. Explain how the project will lead to increased access to career pathways and measurable improvements in career readiness, including durable and leadership skills. **(10 points)**
- 5. Budget and Sustainability: 30 points**
 - 5.1. **(Attachment Required)** Provide a detailed budget aligned with proposed planning activities. The budget should clearly illustrate how funds are being spent and include as much detail as possible. Grant funds must not duplicate or replace existing funding sources and should support new or expanded activities directly related to the APEX Grant Program. **(15 points)**
 - 5.2. Describe how funds will be used effectively and any strategies used to minimize carryforward. **(5 points)**
 - 5.3. Outline the plans to move forward with the project once the planning activities have been completed. **(10 points)**
- 6. Additional Considerations (If Applicable): 10 points**
 - 6.1. Address any unique challenges and opportunities of delivering profession-based learning in rural or socioeconomically disadvantaged regions. **(5 points)**

- 6.2. If applying as a consortium, describe the consortium's structure and identify which LEA will serve as the fiscal agent. Explain how students will be served across the participating LEAs, how costs and resources will be shared, and how economies of scale will be achieved. Describe any shared instruction, lab space or faculty arrangements among consortium partners. **(5 points)**

V. Required Attachments:

- [Executive Summary and Signatures form](#)
- [LEA Strategic Plan \(relevant sections\)](#)
- [Implementation Timeline](#)
- [Detailed Budget](#)