

Mohawk Valley Empowers

Empowering Workforce & Enriching Community

Guidance Document
April 30, 2024



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Introduction

The Empire State Development - Mohawk Valley Regional Office (ESD) is pleased to announce the launch of Mohawk Valley Empowers (MVE), a three-year, \$10 million initiative designed to strengthen our regional workforce ecosystem.

This program emerges from extensive collaboration across six counties, nine higher-ed institutions, BOCES, twenty-two non-profit partners, and industry experts. Through in-depth data analysis and stakeholder engagement, [Mohawk Valley Empowers identified actionable solutions to address the core challenges hindering workforce participation in the Mohawk Valley.](#)

Mohawk Valley Empowers prioritizes empowering people and eliminating barriers to employment for historically marginalized individuals, particularly people of color, women, rural populations, immigrants and refugees, and people with disabilities. MVE recognizes the need to increase workforce participation, expand wraparound services, and redefine career readiness with a particular focus on engaging students at a younger age and opening doors to an increasingly diverse working-age population.

Mohawk Valley Empowers aims to go beyond skills training by empowering individuals through culturally sensitive and community-driven approaches to meet the demands of the growing tourism, agribusiness, and STEM sectors while creating pathways for families to rise out of poverty.

With positive employment growth projected, particularly across the region's priority industries, the MVREDC focuses on creating synergy between industry and a skilled workforce, both contributing to their vibrant communities. MVE will continue to build our economic future through three proven actions:

1. Empowering people who aspire to work to do so with human scale supports.
2. Rebuilding our communities to be lifestyle destinations and vibrant places for families and visitors.
3. Cultivating entrepreneurship and excellence, underpinning sustainability in regional economy.

Mohawk Valley Empowers is about seeing people, understanding their struggles, drawing upon their passions, and illuminating their path to meaningful employment in communities they call home.

Mohawk Valley Empowers Focus

Mohawk Valley Empowers seeks innovative, catalytic projects and programs that address fundamental barriers to employment, advance professional skills development, empower individuals, and promote workplace participation. Proposals will be prioritized based on their ability to meet people where they are on their career journeys, dismantle structural inequities within the workforce pipeline, and consider the holistic needs of participants.

Funding Priorities

- **Regional Focus:** Initiatives with a clear plan for serving residents and strategic industries across the entire Mohawk Valley region.
- **Outcomes Alignment:** Project outcomes aligned with the workforce needs and priorities of both the strategic industries and priority populations within the region.
- **Proven Track Record:** Projects, pilot programs, or phased initiatives with demonstrably successful outcomes in workforce development and serving priority populations, leveraging existing programming or modeling after successful precedents.
- **Wrap-Around Services:** Proposals designed to include services that break down barriers to program and workforce participation, (i.e., childcare, mental health services, transportation, etc.)
- **Scalability:** Initiatives with the potential to be replicated and expanded across the six-county Mohawk Valley region.
- **Leveraged Resources:** Proposals that effectively combine funding from the Mohawk Valley Empowers with additional resources from public, private, or philanthropic partners.
- **Strong Partnerships:** Programs built on collaborative partnerships between municipalities, universities, community colleges, public and private training and education providers, childcare providers, nonprofits, and other regional stakeholders.
- **Data Reporting & Metrics:** Proposals that clearly outline plans for data collection and reporting to ensure program outcomes are clearly tracked and inform future investments.

Priority Populations

Mohawk Valley Empowers encompasses all segments of the working-age population, including:

- K-12 students
- College students
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- People with Disabilities
- Rural Populations
- People of Color
- Veterans
- Unemployed and underemployed individuals

Eligible Applicants

Entities eligible to apply include community-based organizations, not-for-profit organizations, chambers of commerce and trade associations, certain governmental organizations (such as workforce development boards, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), municipalities, etc.), higher education institutions (public or private four-year colleges/universities, or two-year community colleges), career and technical education providers, organized labor training programs, and for-profit training providers within the Mohawk Valley region. Strong partnerships between these entities are highly encouraged.

Proposal Requirements

Applicants seeking funding for their project will be required to submit a [Consolidated Funding Application \(CFA\)](#). The application should include how their project addresses the following criteria:

- **Project/Program Overview:** Briefly describe your proposed initiative, including its goals, target population, and intended impact on workforce participation and economic development.
- **Program Design:** Clearly outline your approach, including the specific activities, services, and strategies you will employ. Highlight innovative elements and address how the program addresses fundamental barriers faced by participants.
- **Track Record:** Demonstrate the effectiveness of your organization and any collaborating partners in implementing successful workforce development programs or identify a model program with proven success to be replicated.
- **Scalability:** Explain your plan for expanding the program across the region, outlining the resources and strategies required for successful replication.
- **Leveraged Resources:** Detail the financial commitment of your organization and any partnering entities, including a breakdown of funding sources beyond the Mohawk Valley Empowers.
- **Partnerships:** Identify your key collaborating organizations, detailing their roles and expertise. Provide evidence of established collaboration and successful partnership efforts.
- **Regional Focus:** Describe your strategy for serving communities across the Mohawk Valley region, ensuring equitable access to your program.
- **Evaluation Plan:** Outline your approach for measuring the program's impact on participant outcomes and workforce development with specific data and measurements within the region.

Timeline

Proposal Deadline: Friday, June 28, 2024 at 4PM

Selection Criteria

A subcommittee from the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council will serve as the advisory committee and work with Empire State Development to help implement the goals of the Fund to ensure its success. The subcommittee will review projects for alignment with the Mohawk Valley Empowers mission, principles, and priorities and will coordinate regular updates to the Mohawk Valley Regional Council on the progress of the Fund.

Proposals will be reviewed and selected by Empire State Development based on their alignment with the following criteria:

- Alignment with Strategic Plan and Challenge Focus
- Strength of Program Design
- Track Record and Scalability
- Leveraged Resources and Partnerships
- Evaluation Plan

Additional Information

For inquiries regarding the Mohawk Valley Empowers and proposal submission, please contact the Mohawk Valley Regional Office of ESD at nys-mohawkval@esd.ny.gov or 315-793-2366.