

Upskill Centralina is an initiative of the Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB), intended to support business growth and success by increasing the skills of the existing workforce. The goal of the program is to retain a strong workforce and increase the stability and competitiveness of the employer.

Grants of **up to \$10,000** are awarded to eligible businesses in the Centralina WDB service region (Anson, Cabarrus, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties) for training in areas including, but not limited to:

- Technical training (5S, ISO, MS Office, Six Sigma, etc.)
- Certifications
- Leadership development
- Soft skills
- Professional development
- Skills assessments related to training

Training may be for individual contributors, leaders, departments and/or teams.

This reimbursable grant program is available for up to 12 months from time of award notification. Companies may reapply in subsequent years –*lifetime maximum of \$20,000*.

Focus and priority will be given for the following areas:

Employer and Employee Improvement

- Deploying new technologies
- Retention diversification of business to strengthen competitive position in market
- Developing high potentials and succession planning
- Advancing employee skills to foster career progression and productivity
- Retaining critical talent
- Process improvement/enhancing business operations
- Averting layoffs

How It Works:

Once a Business or a group of businesses decides on a training program:

- An application should be submitted describing the program.
- The application is reviewed and approved by the Centralina WDB Awards Committee.
- If awarded, a contract is developed between the business and the Centralina WDB.
- The business executes the training program in accordance to the budget set forth in their application.
- An invoice is submitted to Centralina WDB for reimbursement after training is complete.
- Reimbursements will be issued within 30 days of receipt.

Application Process

The business must certify that it is not eligible for or has exhausted efforts to secure training funds through the North Carolina Community College System-Customized Training.

Award recipients will be notified of decision within 14 business days of submitting application. If approved, the Centralina WDB will work with employer to complete required documentation and create an account in the NCWorks System.

Eligibility Requirements

The Upskill Centralina Grant is available to for-profit and not-for-profit businesses located within the Centralina WDB service area, including Anson, Cabarrus, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties.

Employers must:

- Have operated in the service area for the last twelve (12) months
- Employ at least five (5) people at the facility in the service area
- Be current on all federal, state and local tax obligations
- Provide participant data as required
- Meet non-federal share requirements

Training participants must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Be a current employee of the business, per the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- Have established, documented employment with employer for at least six months
- Work within a Centralina WDB service area facility
- Be a citizen of the US or a non-citizen whose status permits employment in the US

Training Providers

Businesses may select their training provider or Centralina WDB can provide recommendations and resources for employers to independently evaluate.

Funding Formula

The business must contribute a matching amount towards the training costs based on the following formula:

Number of Employees	5-50	51-100	Above 100
Business Share	Not less than 10%	Not less than 25%	Not less than 50%

Visit www.CentralinaWorks.com to download the Upskill Centralina application or contact Anna Lu Wilson, alwilson@centralina.org or 704-385-4790 for more information or assistance.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT TO THE EMPLOYER?

This program provides funding to established businesses for educational and skills training for existing workers. It is designed to enhance the skills of employees, thereby increasing employee productivity and the potential for business growth.

HOW IS AN EMPLOYEE DEFINED?

Workers who receive a W-2 for tax filing purposes have an employer-employee relationship.

An individual that does not meet the employer-employee relationship are;

- Those who will receive a 1099 for tax filing purposes or
- Those who are placed through a temporary agency.

WHICH EMPLOYEES WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE NCWORKS UPSKILL CENTRALINA TRAINING GRANT?

This grant is beneficial to employees who have identified skills gaps, where eligible training addresses these gaps, improves employee retention, helps stabilize the business, and will increase the competitiveness of the employee and employer. These employees either:

- Need to upgrade skills and knowledge to retain their current job; OR
- Need to gain new skills and knowledge so they qualify for a different job with their employer.

ARE BUSINESSES THAT HAVE PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED THE INCUMBENT WORKER GRANT THROUGH THE STATE OF NC STILL ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING THROUGH THIS GRANT?

YES! Businesses that have already met the maximum lifetime limit of \$60,000 through the previous versions of the state-sponsored Incumbent Worker Grant are eligible to apply for funding through **Upskill Centralina** and start with a balance of zero.

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

The following businesses are not eligible to apply for funds under this program:

- A business that is currently receiving training funds, either directly or indirectly, from North Carolina state government.
 - This includes trainings that are offered at no cost through the Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) or the NC Community College's Customized Training program.
- A business that has received funds either directly or indirectly from North Carolina state government under any previous training initiative, and the terms of the agreement for training have not been met
- A Workforce Development Board or its administrative entity
- A labor union
- A government entity

CAN A BUSINESS APPLY FOR A GRANT THAT WILL SERVE DIFFERENT, MULTIPLE BUSINESSES WITH COMMON TRAINING NEEDS?

Yes, unique businesses can partner and apply for a collaborative training grant, and *in fact it is encouraged* if it helps an industry sector. The proposal for the common request must:

- Train employees of at least two different businesses, with one of those businesses designated as the Lead Applicant
- Include employees of the Lead Applicant in the training
- Include training descriptions and outcomes that address the employees from all businesses impacted by the proposed common training
- Include information on each business that will be part of the training

WHAT IF WE DON'T USE THE FUNDING AWARDED TO OUR BUSINESS?

If a company is awarded funding from the **Upskill Centralina** program but is unable to use any of the funds in 12 months they forfeit the full grant amount, however, that grant amount will not count against the total lifetime limit for that company.

WHAT ARE NON-FEDERAL SHARE REQUIREMENTS?

The non-federal share provided by an employer participating in the program may include the amount of the wages paid by the employer to a worker while the worker is attending a training program. The employer may provide the share in cash or in kind, fairly evaluated. Examples of the non-federal share are trainees' wages, on-site facility usage, trainees' travel, food, and/or lodging.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A BUSINESS IS AWARDED THE GRANT?

1. A contract is established between the Centralina WDB and the awarded business *within 14 business days* following the review committee's decision.
 - The contract requires information about the employees to be trained to verify eligibility, so businesses should be prepared to provide this information upon notification of award.
2. The Centralina WDB holds the funds for the training until the training is complete.
 - Training must be completed, and a final report submitted within 12 months from the date of the contract between the business and the Centralina WDB.
3. After completion of the training, the business will submit a reimbursement request to the Centralina WDB with their invoice and proof of payment to the training provider.
4. Note: If there is an extenuating circumstance that leads to a need to request a change to the approved training, the business must contact the BSR to discuss the best alternatives. Changes in the training(s) will not necessitate a new application but the business will need to complete an amended training form and submit to the BSR as soon as possible. If necessary, the BSR may convene the grant review committee to review these changes as it relates to the purpose of this grant, including the trainees' originally identified skills gaps. The training will still need to be completed within the one-year timeframe.