

FY27 APEX Center Implementation 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. Funding may support planning activities, capital expenditures, and program implementation (see Utah Code Annotated § 53F-5-224).

A total of \$97,000,000 will be earmarked for implementation 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, including experiences obtained through the Utah First Credential program described in Section 53E-10-310.
 - 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, which may include industry, postsecondary, and community representatives, that reviews program direction and ensures 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.
- **Strand:** A specific career pathway or profession-based learning program that the local education agency (LEA) proposes to implement or expand, such as drones, culinary arts, advanced manufacturing, etc.
- **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 must have a minimum of one industry partner per strand offered. Applicants lacking industry partners should apply for a planning grant instead.
 - Applicants must earn a minimum score in the following categories to be eligible for an implementation grant:
 - Workforce Needs and Program Alignment (19 points)
 - Proposed APEX Center Model, question 2.7 (3 points)
 - Partnerships and Collaboration (19 points)
 - 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:

a. Create a New Profession-Based Learning Program

- i. For funds used to apply profession-based learning models to strands (i.e. drones, Artificial Intelligence (AI), construction, medical assisting, etc.) that are not currently provided within the LEA.

b. Expand an Existing Profession-Based Learning Program

- i. For funds used to add additional strands (i.e. drones, AI, construction, medical assisting, etc.) to existing profession-based learning centers.

c. Enhance Existing Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs to a Profession-Based Learning Program

- i. For funds used to apply profession-based learning models (i.e. drones, AI, construction, medical assisting, etc.,) to existing strands within the LEA.

I. Total Grant Funding Requested:

J. Grant Duration (may extend up to June 30, 2030):

K. Executive Summary: 5 points

- a. Briefly describe the proposed project, its goals, the anticipated impact on students and the local workforce, and any partnerships or key innovative aspects aligned to or in collaboration with regional employers.

IV. Project Narrative:

The total written response should be limited to a **maximum of 12 pages** (not including required attachments). Please be clear and concise in your responses.

Some questions will not be scored as follows:

- **Gray highlight:** These questions need to be answered adequately before money will be awarded. If responses are inadequate, technical assistance will be provided to meet minimum requirements. Inadequate responses will not count against an applicant's score.
- **Yellow highlight:** These questions provide additional useful information and may be used as tiebreakers.

1. Workforce Needs and Program Alignment: 35 points

An application must score a minimum of 19 points in this section to qualify for an implementation grant.

- 1.1. **(Attachment Required)** List the strands that will be offered within the project. For each strand, identify any current programs offered within the CTE Planning regions that could be considered duplicative, such as Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Technical College programs or existing profession-based learning programs. Justify why the proposed project is not an unwarranted duplication by addressing factors such as the physical location of the proposed project, the approximate distance or travel time for students, the grade levels served, the enrollment capacity and current utilization of existing programs, and whether students in your LEA have access to these programs. **(10 points)**

Strand Offered	Technical College Programs Offered	LEA Profession-based Learning Programs Offered	LEA CTE Courses Offered	Other Courses Offered

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- 1.2. Explain how APEX Grant Program funding will be used to create or expand programs in innovative ways that do not duplicate existing programs. **APEX Grant Program funds should not be used to duplicate facilities, labs, or equipment already available. (5 points)**
- 1.3. **(Attachment Required)** Duplicate the template below in a separate document. List the strands (i.e. drones, culinary arts, etc.) that will be included in this project. Provide supporting [labor market data](#) (you could also use these [industry briefs](#)) for each strand listed and cite sources. **(5 points)**

Strand Offered	Job Title	Star Rating	Median Salary	Projected Average Annual Openings (Region)	Source

- 1.4. Describe how the project addresses gaps in training, resources, and high-skill, high-demand career pathways and is aligned with labor market needs. **(10 points)**
- 1.5. **(Attachment Required)** Explain the project’s 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. **(Attachment Required)** Provide a detailed timeline for implementation of the project. Include any necessary planning activities and the projected date for full implementation of the project. The timeline cannot extend beyond the grant completion date of June 30, 2030. **(5 points)**
 - 2.2. Detail the learning experiences, instruction, and profession-based learning approaches that will be used. Describe the instructional shifts that teachers will make when implementing profession-based education and how the physical environment and classroom culture will distinguish the experience from a traditional classroom experience. **(5 points)**
 - 2.3. Describe the course offerings for students within your LEA for each strand, including any connections to current CTE courses, Technical College programs, and higher education degrees offered in the region. Be sure to include any required prerequisite courses (if applicable). **(5 points)**
 - 2.4. Describe the student application process. **(3 points)**

- 2.5. Explain the integration of industry-standard tools and technologies. **(3 points)**
- 2.6. Describe how Utah durable skills and industry standards will be emphasized. Be sure to specifically address leadership skills. Leadership opportunities may include the integration of Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) as applicable. **(5 points)**
- 2.7. Outline the plan for industry professional involvement and mentorship. Distinguish between what is currently happening and plans for the future. **(6 points)** **An application must score a minimum of 3 points on this question to qualify for an implementation grant.**
- 2.8. Detail the comprehensive plan for ensuring high quality instruction is provided, including addressing how professional learning opportunities that are specific to facilitating profession-based educational experiences are provided to teachers. **(3 points)**
- 2.9. **(If Applicable)** Explain the LEA's process for employing educators who have industry experience but are not licensed teachers. Include an explanation of how industry expertise is determined and verified. Describe the required training that will be provided both prior to and during the teaching assignment.

3. Partnerships and Collaboration: 40 points
An application must score a minimum of 19 points in this section to qualify for an implementation grant.

- 3.1. **(Attachment Required)** Duplicate the table below in a separate document. Complete the table by listing the strands offered in the project with corresponding industry partners, concurrent enrollment courses, credentials, certifications, apprenticeships, or other student outcomes. **Each strand must have at least one industry partner listed to qualify for an implementation grant. (10 points)**

Strands Offered	Industry Partners	Concurrent Enrollment Courses	Credentials, Certifications, and apprenticeships	Other Student Outcomes

- 3.2. Describe existing partnerships with industry, postsecondary institutions (including USHE Technical Colleges, where applicable), and other community organizations. Describe any plans to expand or strengthen these partnerships in the future. **(10 points)**
- 3.3. **(Attachment Required)** Attach Letters of Collaboration for all existing partners. Letters of Collaboration should include contact information, a statement of commitment, description of partner roles, contribution of resources, and permission to use the partner's business logo in program promotion materials.

Each strand must have at least one letter of collaboration to qualify for an implementation grant. (8 points)

- 3.4. Describe how partnerships, including the Advisory Board, will be leveraged to maintain the industry relevance of programs, ensure alignment to workforce needs, prevent unwarranted duplication of programs, facilities, or equipment, and support smooth transitions for students into postsecondary education and employment. Include the composition of the Advisory Board ([Advisory Committee Guidebook](#)). **(10 points)**
- 3.5. 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. **(2 points)**
- 3.6. **(If Applicable)** If the program will be co-located or jointly operated on the campus of an institution of higher education, include documentation of the agreement. Co-location does not count as duplication.

4. Student Outcomes and Career Readiness: 20 points

- 4.1. Describe and define the metrics that will be used to measure student proficiency within each strand. Proficiency metrics could include academic, technical, or durable skills. **(5 points)**
- 4.2. Explain how the project will improve student outcomes, including increased access to career pathways and student engagement through real-world, profession-based learning experiences. Clearly outline the specific student outcomes expected. **(10 points)**
- 4.3. Describe how the program will support progression toward postsecondary education or technical training, noting alignment with regional workforce and postsecondary pathways, where applicable. **(5 points)**
- 4.4. **Estimate annual participation by indicating how many students are expected to be served each year and what percentage of the 9-12 student population this represents.** Provide a brief explanation of these estimates. *Note: Students may be counted more than once if they participate in multiple programs.*

Strand	# of Students / Year	% of 9-12 Students in LEA
Total		

5. Budget and Sustainability: 30 points

- 5.1. **(Attachment Required)** Using the budget spreadsheet template provided, provide a detailed budget aligned with proposed activities. The budget should clearly illustrate how funds are being spent and expenditures should be labeled

by strand where applicable. Multi-year budgets should show planned expenditures by year. Grant funds must not duplicate or replace existing funding sources and should support new or expanded activities directly related to the APEX Center Grant Program. **(10 points)**

- 5.2. Describe how funds will be used effectively and any strategies for minimizing carryforward. **(5 points)**
- 5.3. Outline how the project will be sustained after the grant period, identifying guaranteed, anticipated, and aspirational funding sources and shared-use strategies that ensure long-term viability. The response should address sustainability in staffing continuity, facilities and equipment maintenance, and industry partnerships. **(10 points)**
- 5.4. Provide an analysis of the required enrollment in each strand to breakeven, using the definition of breakeven enrollment provided below. Provide details on how breakeven enrollment will be achieved and maintained. **(5 points)**

Breakeven enrollment = Fixed Costs/(Revenue per student – Variable cost per student)

Fixed costs can be determined by completing the table below. Variable costs would typically be supplies and materials needed for each student such as textbooks, goggles, etc. Revenue per student would typically be a portion of the WPU.

	Ongoing Fixed Costs
Personnel (instructors, support staff)	
Facilities (lease, utilities, maintenance)	
Supplies & Materials	
Professional Development	
Admin/Overhead	
Other	
Total Annual Cost	

- 5.5. **(If Applicable)** List all additional funding that will support the project.
- 5.6. **(If Applicable)** The funds from this grant will primarily be provided through reimbursement. Up to 20% of the project budget may be provided up front as a lump-sum payment, if justified. If requesting a lump-sum payment, specify the amount (no more than 20% of the total budget) and justify the request.
- 5.7. **(If Applicable)** Explain the need and intended use of any proposed capital expenditures, including how they will be coordinated with existing regional facilities and resources.

6. Additional Considerations (If Applicable): 30 points

Please answer the following questions only *if applicable* to the proposed project.

- 6.1. *Rural or Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Areas*: Address the unique challenges and opportunities of delivering profession-based education in rural or socioeconomically disadvantaged regions. Provide evidence that supports the claim of a rural or socioeconomically disadvantaged region. **(10 points)**
- 6.2. *Consortium Applications: (Attachment Required)* 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. Must provide a memorandum of understanding if applying as a consortium. **(5 points)**
- 6.3. *Enhancement of Existing Profession-Based Learning Programs*: Describe how existing profession-based learning programs will be enhanced and continuously improved using APEX Grant Program funds. Describe how these changes will improve outcomes. **(10 points)**
- 6.4. *Enhancing a Current CTE Program*: Describe how the proposed project aligns with current LEA programs funded through the weighted pupil unit (WPU) add-on described in Section [53F-2-311](#). Describe what differentiates the proposed project from the current CTE program. **(5 points)**

V. Required Attachments:

- [Executive Summary and Signatures form](#)
- [Duplication](#)
- [Labor Market Data Sources](#)
- [LEA Strategic Plan \(relevant sections\)](#)
- [Implementation Timeline](#)
- [Industry Partners and Pathways](#)
- [Letters of Collaboration](#)
- [Evidence of Agreement with Institution of Higher Education \(if co-locating\)](#)
- [Detailed Multi-Year Budget](#)
- [Consortium MOU](#)