# Request for Applications: Priority Hire Grant Program
## Instructions for Applicants

## 1.0 Introduction

King County is seeking applications from local jurisdictions interested in starting up their own Priority Hire Program. The County plans to award grants to successful applicants that can be used to fund startup expenses on one or more construction projects and hopefully lead to the establishment of a permanent Program. This grant program, which includes federal funding sources, is intended to help mitigate the adverse economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by creating new job opportunities and family wage careers for individuals who reside in the most economically distressed areas of King County.

## 2.0 Background

King County's Priority Hire Program is a workforce and economic development strategy that fosters opportunities for good-paying careers in the construction industry for individuals residing in King County Priority Hire ZIP Codes. The Priority Hire Program provides training and family wage employment opportunities in the construction industry and requires that a percentage of labor hours be worked by Priority Hire workers on all King County public works construction projects over $5 million. One of Priority Hire's main goals has been to increase retention rates and broaden access to apprenticeships and family-wage jobs for women and people of color. Priority Hire is currently implemented through a Master Community Workforce Agreement (MCWA), a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement between King County and 18 construction labor unions that sets the basic terms and conditions of employment on covered public works projects. The MCWA strengthens the collaborative relationship with labor partners and is an efficient contracting business practice that sets clear expectations on all construction projects above specified dollar thresholds. Local jurisdictions applying for grant funds would be expected to establish their own CWA for designated construction projects that is modeled after the County's MCWA.

The County's Apprenticeship Program and Priority Hire Program work in tandem to improve access to paid training and jobs while growing a skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of the county's population. Both programs have been successful in addressing the widening gap between the demand for construction labor and the supply of skilled trade workers in our regional labor market. Since its inception, the programs have exceeded the target proportion of labor hours to workers from Priority Hire Zip Codes, with nearly one-third of the labor hours performed by participants who reside in Priority Hire communities. In 2022, the White House featured King County's Priority Hire program as an example of how evidence can inform government practices and policies.

For additional background information about Priority Hire, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions link on King County's website.

## 3.0 King County's Priority Hire Grant Program

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Building on the success of its own Priority Hire Program, King County is now providing grant opportunities for all King County cities, school districts, public colleges and universities, or other public entities that have an interest in developing a local Priority Hire Program. Grant awards are intended to be used as seed money to assist local jurisdictions in the early stages of establishing a local Priority Hire Program.

Local jurisdictions that may not be familiar with Priority Hire Programs are encouraged to use [King County Priority Hire as a model](#) and utilize priority hiring on a single construction project as a "pilot project." A pilot approach provides an opportunity to smooth the way for organizational change while demonstrating success and gaining experience from the start. Pilot proposals are welcome and can help to tailor the local Priority Hire Program to meet unique needs.

Jurisdictions may also be interested initiating a phased program approach that begins with a pilot as phase one and then moves to broader implementation on multiple projects with phase two. Finally, some jurisdictions may want to move immediately with full program implementation and skip having a pilot project.

King County expects to fund grant proposals that include a clear vision for how the jurisdiction plans to move forward with Priority Hire by:  (i) moving forward with a local Priority Hire pilot project; or (ii) initiating a phased approach with a pilot project followed by a broader implementation at a later date; or (iii) the immediate start-up of a full program. Funding may be used for the following elements of a local Priority Hire Program:

1. CWA Administrator (can be staff and/or a consultant resource)

2. Reporting System (set up and licensing costs)

3. Legal Analysis (legal expertise to advise on design and start-up of local Priority Hire Program)

4. Staff Training (training for project managers, management, etc.)

5. Data Analysis/Reporting (standard reporting on program results)

6. Website Development (local jurisdiction site to track progress of project(s))

7. Community Outreach (for recruiting priority hire workers from community and pre-apprenticeship programs)

For additional details regarding the elements above, please refer to Attachment A:  [Priority Hire Program Elements form.](#) This document includes both required and discretionary elements of Priority Hire that should be used in the design of a pilot or full program proposal.

Please note that Priority Hire is most beneficial when applied to public works projects that are of a certain size, ideally $5 million and above. Pilot projects below the $5 million threshold will still

be reviewed; however, project size should be a primary consideration when selecting a project that is best suited for a Priority Hire pilot and a grant proposal.

If you have a project below the $5 million threshold, please consult with King County staff to determine whether the project would be an appropriate fit for Priority Hire. To do so, you may send an email to Joe Baca at jbaca@kingcounty.gov with a brief explanation of your proposed project and any questions you may have. Please insert the words, "KC Priority Hire Grant Application" in the email subject line.

Local Priority Hire Programs funded by this program must serve unemployed or underemployed workers from economically distressed areas, including:

- Individuals who are unemployed due to COVID-19 and its negative health and/or economic impacts, and those who were already unemployed when the pandemic began and remain so due to the negative economic impact of the pandemic.
- Individuals who want and are available for work, including those who have looked for work sometime in the past 12 months or who are employed part time but who want and are available for full-time work.
- Individuals currently employed but who are seeking to move to a job that provides better opportunities for economic advancement, such as higher wages or more opportunities for career advancement. A desired outcome of this program is to create long-term career pathways that lead to better jobs and better pay.

Local jurisdictions will have discretion in identifying economically distressed areas within their boundaries.

## 4.0 Funding Available & Proposal Deadlines

Starting in early 2023 and continuing through the end of 2024, a total of $3,000,000 in Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds will be awarded by King County to local jurisdictions. King County is planning to award up to $500,000 per proposal, with the understanding that some grants may exceed this amount depending on specific proposals and the overall number of successful grant applicants.  Grant applications will be accepted on a rolling basis with **priority given to proposals submitted by March 22, 2023**.  The grant application process will close when all funds have been awarded. Please note that all awarded funding must be obligated[1] by the end of 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026.

## 5.0 Instructions and Requirements for Grant Applicants

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[1] *See* U.S. Department of Treasury, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, Final Rule Frequently Asked Questions 13.7 (discussing when funds are considered obligated for purposes of this funding source), at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule-FAQ.pdf (last visited Feb. 21, 2023).

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An application for a grant consists of a **Grant Proposal Narrative** and **a Grant Cost Proposal Spreadsheet**.

**Grant Proposal Narrative:** King County requests that the proposal narrative not exceed 5 single-spaced pages, 12-point font, including any tables, figures, and photos. Figure and table legends should not be smaller than 10-point font. The information listed below should be included in the proposal narrative.

1. **Project Title.** Include the title of each project that will be part of your proposal.
2. **Project Purpose and Scope of Work.** Include a statement that summarizes the purpose of each project and highlights the scope of work. As part of the scope of work description, please include basic information such as estimated total square footage, length, or other information that will be useful in understanding the magnitude of the project(s).
3. **Project Location.** List the address or location of each project where construction will take place.
4. **Project Schedule.** Briefly describe and/or list the estimated schedule milestones associated with each project. Please include the estimated schedules of each major phase of a project including the estimated start and completion timeframes for the design, bidding, and construction phases.
5. **Project Cost.** Provide a breakdown of the budget and/or the engineer's cost estimate that has been approved for each construction project. As part of the breakdown, include an estimate of the maximum allowable construction cost (MACC), the estimate of the total labor construction costs that are part of the MACC, and other project costs. For technical questions regarding project costs, please contact Joe Baca by email at jbaca@kingcounty.gov or call 206-477-9443.

**Grant Cost Proposal Spreadsheet:** Please include the estimated costs ("expenses") of your grant proposal. These are the costs you are expecting to be reimbursed by the grant funds. A template is provided for your convenience in Attachment B: Grant Cost Proposal spreadsheet.

### -Submission Instructions

All applications should be submitted via the online Grant Portal. Applicants must complete the required elements of each section before advancing to the next section. Once submitted, applications cannot be changed. It is therefore recommended to have all application materials compiled before beginning your application.

Once all sections of the form have been completed and the application is ready to submit, click the "Submit" button at the bottom of Section II. There will be a confirmation screen confirming that your application has been successfully submitted.

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### *-Submission and Review Schedule*

Grant applications will be accepted on a rolling basis with **priority given to proposals submitted by March 22, 2023**.

Applications will be reviewed by the King County Finance and Business Operations Division's Business Development and Contract Compliance team. Applicants submitting proposals by March 22, 2023 can expect notice of grant approval (or denial) by the end of March 2023 (or within 2 to 4 weeks of applying if the application is received after March 22, 2023).

Upon approval of the grant proposal, **King County will ask all awarded jurisdictions to sign a contract agreement.** Please note that the contract agreement will obligate funding recipients to specific reporting requirements. See Attachment C for a copy of the Contract Agreement for Subrecipients.

Please contact Sandy Hanks via [email](#) or at 206-263-9717 for any general questions about the submission.

## 6.0 Evaluation Criteria for Grant Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria and scoring methodology. Note that criteria #4 is a mandatory requirement and grant applicants must assert they will comply with all terms and conditions of the Contract Agreement for Subrecipients (See Attachment C).  Also, criteria #5 is a mandatory requirement and grant applicants must assert they will use the designated Diversity Compliance Management System (DCMS) reporting system. King County reserves the right to select applicants based on the best interests of King County, and as a result, may not select the highest scoring proposals for award. King County reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject any and all applications received without penalty and not to issue any contract as a result of this request for applications.

| # | Evaluation Criteria | Description | Max. Points |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Quality & Clarity of Proposal, including Cost Proposal** | The proposal and cost estimates are clearly articulated.  There is a clear commitment to implement Priority Hire on one or more projects. | 40 |
| 2 | **Project Liaison (single point of contact with King County)** | The project liaison is committed to working with King County and has experience managing construction projects and/or has experience working with project managers to manage construction projects. | 20 |

| # | Evaluation Criteria | Description | Max. Points |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Designated Project (or Projects) | Each project is $5 million or over and involves a diversity of construction trades (please contact King County if your project is less than $5 million for consultation). | 40 |
| 4 | Ability to Meet Terms & Conditions of Grant Agreement | Each grant applicant is required to meet the terms and conditions of the grand agreement, which includes standard reporting requirements for federal funding and timing requirements (obligated by the end of 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026). | Mandatory (no score) |
| 5 | Reporting System | Proposers must indicate a commitment to use the DCMS reporting system. | Mandatory (no score) |
| | Total Evaluation | | 100 |

## 7.0 Reporting Schedule and Metrics

**All grant subrecipients shall provide the County with the following reports in a timely manner, based on the terms in Attachment C:**

- Monthly / Quarterly Expenditure Report by the 10th of the month following expenditure to facilitate required quarterly County reporting.
- Payment Request Report
- Closeout Report

**Diversity Compliance Management System (DCMS) Reporting**

All grant Subrecipients shall report monthly by the 15th of the month using the King County DCMS website located at:  https://kingcounty.diversitycompliance.com.  Subrecipients shall require their prime construction contractor ("Contractor") to submit monthly payment and payroll reports for the Contractor, including subcontractors and suppliers using the DCMS. The Contractor shall submit payroll reports weekly into the DCMS for all subcontractors and firms required to pay prevailing wages.  The Contractor is responsible for electronically approving the payrolls submitted by all subcontractors.

## 8.0 Other Priority Hire Considerations

It is recommended that local jurisdictions obtain legal advice in designing and proposing local Priority Hire Programs for purposes of this grant opportunity, including the legal basis for the program. In selecting applicants, executing contracts, and issuing grant funds with respect to

this program, King County takes no position on the legality of any proposed project(s) and is not responsible for defending any proposed project(s) if challenged on legal or other grounds.