

# Job Skills Program Frequently Asked Questions

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## Introduction

This document is designed to support colleges, training providers, and business partners in navigating the Job Skills Program (JSP) administered by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). It brings together common questions and detailed responses about JSP guidelines, budgeting, documentation, eligibility, and application procedures. The FAQs are grouped by topic to make it easier to find the information you need at any stage of project development, application, or implementation. Whether you are new to the program or looking for clarification on specific policies, this resource is intended to provide helpful, accessible answers.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Eligibility

**Q: Are public ports eligible for the JSP?**

**A:** No. 501(c)4 organizations, which are civic leagues and local associations of municipal employees, are not eligible as they are no commerce-producing entities. 504(c)6 entities, which are business leagues, may be eligible if the training project they propose is to train their own employees for employment-specific skills.

**Q: Puyallup Tribal Enterprises (PTE), the economic development arm of the Puyallup Tribe, operates independently of the tribal government and has its own UBI. [Company] is part of PTE's Manufacturing Division. Would they be eligible for a JSP grant? Also, are the UIE and Cage numbers relevant for the OMWBE field in the application, and how should we include them?**

**A:** Tribal governments are not eligible JSP business partners, but tribal business enterprises like PTE—operating independently of tribal government—are generally eligible. Include the UIE and Cage numbers and details about the company's manufacturing role in the application. For review, the college should reference this documentation in the project narrative, especially in sections 2B, 2J, and 2K.

**Q: Medicine Creek Enterprise Corporation (Nisqually Tribe) and Island Enterprises, Inc. (Squaxin Island Tribe) manage business operations for their respective tribes. Are they eligible JSP business partners?**

**A:** Yes. Tribal business enterprises like Medicine Creek Enterprise Corporation and Island Enterprises, Inc. are not considered tribal governments and can partner with colleges for JSP training. Eligibility depends on the enterprise being incorporated, governed by its own corporate authority, and generating commerce in Washington. Tribal government employees are not eligible, but employees of businesses operated by the enterprise—such as gaming or manufacturing—are. Focus on the specific business or consortium of businesses receiving training.

**Q: Can you confirm if Kitsap Transit, a Public Transportation Benefit Area Authority, is excluded from JSP participation due to JSP guidelines stating that "government and municipal agencies... are not eligible as businesses to train agency employees"? Does their status as a public transit authority disqualify them under the definition of "business and industry"?**

A: Kitsap Transit is not eligible as a JSP business partner. As a Public Transportation Benefit Area Authority (PTBAA), it is considered a municipal government entity. JSP guidelines and governing statute exclude government and municipal agencies from participating as business partners to train their employees. Public Transit does not meet the definition for “Business and Industry” eligible applicant in our governing statute:

*“Business and industry” mean a private corporation, institution, firm, person, group, or association concerned with commerce, trades, manufacturing, or the provision of services within the state, or a public or nonprofit hospital licensed by the department of social and health services.*

## Match Funds

Q: If two companies come together to form a consortium, and both are smaller than 500K in sales, are they both exempt from the 100% match requirement?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a hard number on the cash match amount? Is 20% standard or just a common practice? Where (if anywhere) is this 20% articulated? Would offering less than 20% make an application less competitive?

A: There is no hard requirement or set percentage for a cash match in the Job Skills Program (JSP). While a 20% match is commonly referenced—such as \$10,000 on a \$50,000 grant—that number is not formally required or written into the guidelines. It’s more of a typical practice than a rule.

What’s more important is showing your (and the business’) commitment to the project. That can be through a mix of cash and in-kind support (like donated equipment, staff time, or training space). Applications are evaluated on the quality of the match and the strength of the partnership with the college or training provider—not just the dollar amount. In fact, there are successful JSP applications with very little or even no cash contribution. If cash is a challenge, it’s completely acceptable to include a brief explanation—such as business hardship or limited resources. That context can go a long way in helping reviewers understand your situation.

Bottom line: While a 20% cash match might help in a very competitive round, it is not required. If you can clearly show your engagement and support for the project in other meaningful ways, you’ll still be in a strong position.

If you and a group of CEC members want to have a conversation about this policy for future program guideline updates, please let SBCTC know. It is a multi-step process to update policies for this program.

Q: Is it required to document in the budget narrative how the cash match contribution is being used? Are there examples of how this needs to be written?

A: It is good practice to indicate where the cash match contribution will be applied in the budget narrative. While the exact guidelines do not explicitly state this, the requirement to provide detailed, auditable documentation for the cash match (such as employee wages, salaries, and benefits) suggests that transparency about how the cash match is allocated and used is important. Since the match can be either cash or in-kind and must align with the project, documenting how the cash match contributes to specific areas of the project (like Project

Development or Instructional costs) will ensure clarity and compliance with the JSP guidelines.  
See sample below.

<b>5J. Describe how funds will be used for Instructional – Contracts.</b>	
<b>Instructional Contracts</b>	\$33,240.00
Impact WA AS9100 Training Program 160 hours X \$264.00 = \$42,240.00	
Business Cash Contribution \$9,000.00 + Total Grant Budget \$33,240.00 = Total Instructional Budget \$42,240	

**Q: If we allocate a portion of the cash match for project development and/or administrative costs, and the combined total exceeds 25% of the total grant award – is that unallowable?**

**A:** Yes. The guidelines specify that costs for Project Development and Administrative expenses combined cannot exceed 25% of the total grant award. The total grant award refers only to the public grant amount and excludes matched dollars and other resources contributed by other parties. Therefore, while the cash match contributes to the overall project budget, it does not impact the limit on Project Development and Administrative costs in relation to the grant award itself. If you allocate a portion of the cash match toward these costs and the combined total exceeds 25% of the grant award (not the total project budget), it would be unallowable.

**Q: Where do we indicate travel cost match a client pays for getting their people to training? Do we modify anything in the worksheet template or put it into an existing line item?**

### Job Skills Program - Matching Funds Description

Please complete the following table with information about matching funds for your Job Skills Program project.  
See the Match section of the JSP Fiscal Guidelines for complete matching funds requirements.

	Amount	Description of how Match Funds will be spent
Cash Match	\$10,000.00	
Trainee Wages & Salaries	\$0.00	
Instructional Salaries & Benefits		
Project Coordination Salaries & Benefits		
Goods & Services		
Instructional Travel		
Instructional Contracts		
Capital Outlays (equipment)		
Direct Program Admin Salaries & Benefits		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>	

**A:** Here is the number one key to answering match questions: If the employer is paying for training expenses as a part of their match, the expenses must be allowable JSP expenses. The Budget section of the guidelines provides an exception for trainee travel as an acceptable match expenditure but not as an acceptable cost for the grant:

#### Travel

Expenditures for transportation, meals, hotel, and other expenses associated with travel related to allowable grant activities. Reimbursement for travel costs must be within OFM travel rates and regulations which can be found in the State Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAAM), Chapter 10.90. Please note, when the grant recipient reimburses travel under this grant using state funds, the same OFM travel rates and regulations must be applied.

Trainee travel is not an acceptable cost for this grant but is acceptable as match.

If the expenses are allowable as match and are a part of the cash contribution from the business, they need to be documented within the budget detail and then included in the Cash Match budget area on the match worksheet. For allowable match that is directly paid by the business, it should be included in the other budget areas of the match worksheet (reserving the Trainee Wages & Salaries area for the projected match amount from the Courses tab of the worksheet). The Cash Match worksheet (shown in the example above) includes a line for Instructional Travel. The guidelines include a description of the required documentation for match expenditures.

**Q: How do non-profit organizations that want to apply for JSP funding determine their gross business income (GBI) and its impact on the match requirement?**

**A:** Non-profit organizations' GBI is their income reported to the Department of Revenue for the previous fiscal year. To waive the match requirement, the GBI must be less than \$500,000 and the organization must pay wages to trainees while in training.

**Q: For purposes of the JSP grant match calculation, are employees who are paid by a Washington-based business but work remotely or at a physical site outside of Washington eligible to be included in the match? Specifically:**

1. Are remote employees who live and work out of state, but are paid from a Washington site, eligible?
2. Are employees who physically work at a site outside Washington, but are on payroll through the Washington site, eligible?

**A:** Scenarios to consider for out-of-state workers:

- Remote employees serving a full-time role for a Washington business but living outside of the State (i.e. software, accounting, or salesperson). - Not Eligible.
- Employees serving a full-time role for a Washington business, living outside of the State, commuting to work on site full or part time. - Eligible.
- Remote employees that live outside of the state and do physical work at another site/location and are paid as an employee from the Washington business. - Not Eligible.
- Paid third-party providers - can participation from 1099 individuals (independent contractor, freelancers, consultants, self-employed workers), count towards match. For example, if a company outsources IT services with a local provider, can that person participate in cybersecurity training with the team and have it count towards the total match? What if the third-party were located out of state, like remote employees? - Not Eligible.

Note: Guidelines are clear that wages and benefits paid to employees while in JSP training are eligible to track for business required match to the grant.

## Budget & Budget Revisions

**Q: Does "total budget" refer to the grant award budget, or is it the sum of both the grant award budget and the cash match (total project budget)?**

**A:** The total grant award constitutes only the public grant and excludes matched dollars and any other resources contributed by other parties.

**Q: Can project development and administrative costs be up to 25% of the total of the grant amount plus the cash match?**

**A:** No. The 25% limit applies only to the grant amount.

**Q: What are the percentage maximums for budgeted administrative costs?**

**A:** The total budget for Administration expenditures cannot exceed 20% of the total grant amount. The combined total budget for Administration and Project Development cannot exceed 25% of the total grant amount.

**Q: What is the process for revising the JSP budget?**

**A:** A complete budget revision is not needed for any leftover funding; surplus funding will automatically expire at the end of the biennium. You will need to make sure that your budget reflects the appropriate level of funding to cover any revisions you are making. The key is to have the funding available on the budget line where it is being invoiced. A revision can be submitted without prior approval if you are moving 10% or less between lines. If it is more than 10%, SBCTC would need to approve it (by email) before you submit it.

## Courses

**Q: Is it possible to create an I-BEST JSP?**

**A:** Yes, JSP allows basic skills instruction. It will look different when deployed in a customized training for a specific employer or group of employers than it does in a more traditional instructional program, but still allowable and welcome.

Because JSP allows basic skills training for employees, I-BEST would make a good model for training when those skills are needed for success in other training provided by the project. We have had many projects that have included language skills, including English for employees speaking another language. One thing to remember is that only students participating in the JSP training can be enrolled in the courses covered by the funding. Using an I-BEST model would need two instructors, one for the basic skills and one for the other skills being trained. There is no reason you could not build the cost for both instructors into the expenses for the JSP courses. Also, you can use instructors that are already employed by the college to conduct the training. I'm not sure if your CE program would be able to support a regular ongoing I-BEST course, it would depend on demand. This does sound like a great way to offer employee training for a business that has employees that need basic skills to develop successful advancement in skillsets that a business needs.

**Q: Can a Washington-based company send an employee for out-of-state training and still qualify for the JSP grant?**

**A:** Yes. The JSP guidelines do not prevent this kind of training. The expectation is that all training included in the project is specific to the needs analysis and resulting program design. Appropriate description of how the training fits should be included in the project overview section of the proposal.

**Q: A contractor we have worked with a long time mentioned that they have had JSP funds approved to send a set of employees to an outside certification training. Is this something that has been approved in the past?**

A: Yes. Most businesses take advantage of the ability to conduct onsite customized training in JSP. JSP participants are allowed to design a training program that meets their needs, and training is not restricted to local or onsite courses. Participants in JSP training must be employees of the project business partner.

## Allowable/Unallowable Costs

Q: Can a US-based and Washington-based company provide trainings under the JSP to employees located outside the US?

A: No. JSP is for Washington businesses and Washington workers, paid for by Washington taxpayers.

Q: On page 19 of the Program Guidelines, under Unallowable Costs, it states that safety training—defined as required training considered an ongoing responsibility of the company—is not allowed. As part of our grant proposal, the business is looking to provide specialized training (ex., Hoisting, Rigging, Signaling & Lift Director Training) for its employees. While they currently offer internal training, they're seeking a more formal, structured program with certification. Since safety compliance is an inherent component of this and many blue-collar training programs, would this still fall under unallowable costs?

A: Companies must provide fundamental safety training as part of their ongoing responsibilities—this is typically considered unallowable under JSP guidelines. To determine if the proposed training is allowable, consider the following:

- Does the training go beyond fundamental, employer-required safety instruction?
- Is the company already offering basic hoisting, rigging, and signaling safety training? If so, that portion may not be covered.
- Can the training be positioned as a skills upgrade rather than compliance?

To align with JSP priorities, the proposal should:

- Clearly position the training as skills enhancement – not simply compliance;
- Highlight the structured curriculum and industry-recognized training (if applicable);
- Confirm that the business does not view this as a substitute for mandatory employer-provided safety training; and
- Ensure the company seeks to elevate worker competency beyond fundamental safety obligations, making the funding request justifiable under workforce skill enhancement.

Q: If grant money buys the books, do these books have to be turned in to SBCTC at the end of the training period?

A: No. If the curriculum materials are expendable workbooks, the college retains ownership of the workbooks and would determine the extent of their useful life. See also *Fiscal Guidelines*:

### Goods and Services

Items with an individual acquisition cost of \$5,000 or less or a useful life of less than one year or services of a routine nature necessary to carry out grant activities. Note: Interagency agreements (contracts between two or more public entities) are considered services and should be budgeted and invoiced in the “goods and services” category. Examples: textbooks, instructional materials, copying, postage, fax, telephone, printing, rental of equipment or laptops, interagency agreement



with another college to provide training JSP funds cannot be used to purchase capital outlays. Capital outlays are defined as items having a useful life in excess of one year and a per unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more.

#### Purchased Items

Non-capitalized property and equipment procured with JSP grant funds shall remain the property of the educational institution and must be under inventory control.

#### Curriculum Materials

Curriculum materials are to be retained by the educational institution. Curriculum materials may include lesson plans, course synopses, exams, task analyses, videotapes and other media productions, manuals and workbooks, and any other instructional materials either purchased “off-the-shelf” or custom developed.

**Q: If the per-unit acquisition is under the \$10,000 threshold but the item has a useful life of more than one year, can JSP funds be used to purchase it?**

**A:** Possibly. Reach out to your business office to ask how they would classify the item you want to purchase. If the business office designates the item as a capital outlay, a different funding source will need to be used. If the business office determines the item is not classified as a capital outlay, it will remain the property of the college. The JSP Fiscal Guidelines state: “JSP funds cannot be used to purchase capital outlays. Capital outlays are defined as items having a useful life in excess of one year and a per unit acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more.”

## Capital Outlays

**Q: In reviewing the JSP Fiscal Guidelines, it states that “JSP funds cannot be used to purchase capital outlays. Capital outlays are defined as items having a useful life in excess of one year and a per unit acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more.” If the per-unit acquisition is under the \$10,000 threshold but has a useful life in excess of one year, can JSP funds be used to purchase these items?**

**A:** It depends on whether the item is classified as a capital outlay by the college’s business office. If the business office would designate the items as capital outlays, then a different funding source would need to be used.

## Consortia Projects

**Q: How is the match requirement handled in a consortium with some (or all) businesses under the 500K GBI?**

**A:** The rule regarding match requirements is meant to apply to individual businesses. If two companies form a consortium, and both are smaller than 500K in sales, they are both exempt from the 100% match requirement. When there is a consortium project and if there is even one business with a GBI of \$500K or higher, the businesses will have to match the entire project budget. However, not all businesses will need to match at the same level. We have had consortia projects that have had one or a couple of the businesses contribute the majority of the match, while smaller businesses may contribute little to none. What matters is:

- Which businesses are paying their employee wages and benefits during training (a requirement);



- How the overall match – cash and/or in-kind – is met; and
- For pre-employment training (i.e., participants not yet hired), the match must come from other sources (cash and in-kind contributions), not wages.

Q: For consortium projects, are trainings required to be utilized together, or can companies participate in trainings separately?

A: There is no requirement for which or how many consortium members must participate in a specific training course. Companies can participate in trainings separately.

Q: If a business partners with another in a consortium project, are they then exempt from the two-projects-in-five-years requirement?

A: Yes, consortium projects do not count as independent projects for a business.

Q: Are there requirements for training overlap in consortia?

A: No. There are no requirements for training overlap for businesses participating in a consortium project.

## Subcontractors

Q: Does subcontracting instruction for a JSP grant proposal hurt the proposal's score?

A: No, the JSP review rubric does not downgrade application scores based on subcontractors being part of the proposal. However, the program's enabling statute emphasizes the benefit to both business/industry and educational institutions. So, SBCTC does encourage colleges to maximize the amount of training they can directly provide. If you are considering subcontracting instruction to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, ask:

- How does the college still benefit from the grant?
- Are there elements of the training that the college can deliver?
- Is subcontracting necessary to meet a business's unique and urgent needs?

These and other questions you ask yourself will help guide your conversations with college leaders, the business customer and potential 3<sup>rd</sup> party trainers.

Q: Should a subcontract for training be done via an Inter-Agency Agreement and under Goods and Services or under contracts? (Context: For JSP the colleges are responsible for all training under their grant contract. It is common for the colleges to subcontract some of their training to other trainers. In this case, SVC will be subcontracting with WWU to do some of the training during the project).

A: The fiscal guidance for interagency agreements states that, "Interagency agreements (contracts between two or more public entities) are considered services and should be budgeted and invoiced in the '**goods and services**' category." Examples: textbooks, instructional materials, copying, postage, fax, telephone, printing, rental of equipment or laptops, interagency agreement with another college to provide training.

Q: Can JSP funds be used toward an online class?

A: Yes. Online courses provided by a subcontractor to the college are allowable as a part of the training plan. It is always best to be able to describe why you have decided a specific class is the best way/cost to deliver the planned training.

## Application in OGMS

Q: Is it possible to submit an application without a business partner?

A: No. A business partner is required for all JSP applications. The guidelines state: “JSP projects require an eligible educational institution and an eligible business or businesses.” (Page 7 of Program and Fiscal Guidelines, Eligibility of Participants)

Q: Where do we list Contractor Goods and materials in OGMS? It looks like 5G is only for institutional goods and services. For example, our Project Management instructor is providing books and licenses that we will reimburse.

A: Use line 5G for Instructional – Goods and Services. Use line 5J for Instructional – Contracts.

Q: In section 2, there is an opportunity to identify the business as OMWBE. If they are not registered (not verified on the OMWBE List), how do we present this information in the application form?

A: We are aware that OMWBE designation is not common for businesses that may qualify but are not actively pursuing government contracts. You can mark Yes on item 2K and write “See Needs Analysis on 2B”. Under 2B, describe or indicate the identification of minority or women owned business in your response.

Q: In the JSP application, Section 2, item 2P, does the part “circumstances regarding the need for continuation” mean there is a way to continue JSP grants?

A: JSP does not automatically award funding for a continuation project. Item 2P is part of the funding priorities section and is designed to give priority to projects that were funded for a shorter part of the year and may want to apply for another project to complete all desired training. In the review process, reviewers may provide points to projects that meet any of the funding priorities.

Q: Do application documents get updated every year?

A: We always strive to improve program documents. We encourage you to download the current application resources posted in OGMS. This will ensure that you are using the correct document for your JSP application. If you are creating a draft application prior to the application opening, feel free to copy and paste information into the current documents.

Q: Section 2, 2C-2 Legislative District question. Which one should be used: the federal district or the WA State district?

A: Since JSP is state funded, use the WA State legislative district.

Q: The option to submit the application is not active/visible, or the fields do not appear when sections are clicked.

A: Permissions in OGMS do not carry over from year to year. Each new fiscal year requires a new permission because the applications are given a different name (due to the ‘FYXX’ included in the name). Applicants should contact their college’s security contact/administrator(s) to update user accounts and assign appropriate permissions for the current application cycle.

**Q:** Where can I find additional information for cluster question 2F?

**A:** Use the [Local Workforce Development Boards](#). Additional information regarding location and contacts for each of the Boards may also be found on the website. Once you have determined the Workforce Development Board for your area, the next step would be to research the local board website (or contact them) for specific industry sector information related to the business and trainees that will be involved in your project. The more information you can document (examples are in the question) about the industry need, the more competitive your proposal will be in showing the need for training.

**Q:** Where can I find wage threshold policy information?

**A:** Page 7 of the Program Guidelines, under JSP Policies, which states that: Wage and Compensation – A goal of the JSP program is to support workforce training for businesses that provide wages resulting in earnings that support families and jobs that include an employer-paid health benefits package and opportunities for wage progression.

**Q:** When routing the assurance for signature, our employer signed multiple lines of the assurance document. Do we need to have the form resigned?

**A:** No need to re-sign. If you have documents signed separately, just submit each copy as an attachment to the proposal.

## Trainee, Match, Course and Outcomes Spreadsheet

**Q:** On the JSP Trainee Course, Wage & Match spreadsheet, on the “courses” tab, is it required to break out benefits, or can they be combined with hourly salary?

**A:** Use whichever is easier.

**Q:** When using the Trainee, Match, Course and Outcomes spreadsheet, Courses tab, and you cannot find a matching trainee position title from the dropdown in Column I of the Course tab.

**A:** Choose "Other" from the dropdown in Column I and then use Column J to specify the trainee title.

<a href="#">CIP Code</a>	Course Title	Training Start Date (mm/dd/yy)	Training End Date (mm/dd/yy)	Training Provider	Trainee Position Title	If you chose "Other" in Column I, specify trainee title here
					Other	Lean Practitioner

## Review/Rubric

**Q:** Is there a scoring rubric for JSP proposals?

**A:** Grant reviewers provide independent scores for the projects they determine best meet the purpose and priorities set for JSP projects. The cumulative score from all reviewers is used to rank projects for funding. Project proposals that clearly describe the business need and how training meets these needs related to the purpose and priorities for JSP, receive the highest score. SBCTC staff will also apply priority points to proposals for projects meeting the set priority areas.

**Q:** Is there an advantage to applying earlier in the cycle?

A: No. Make sure your application is submitted on or before the deadline. Staff are only available to provide assistance until 4:00 PM on the last day of the application period.

## Social Security Number (SSN)

Q: One of the companies applying for the JSP grant with us is concerned about giving us his SSN. Is there a way around this?

A: SSN does not go into any section of the grant proposal. When the employer signs the assurance document, he agrees to work with the college to do wage progression research, which may or may not utilize SSNs of JSP trainees. Pay records must remain available from the business for any wages/benefits used as a match for the grant by the business. Colleges must have an MOU guiding their relationship with their business partner. Security and use of SSNs may be further defined in that MOU.

## Reporting

Q: Would it be possible to remove the trainee's signatures from the attendance forms, given that the training was virtual, while still retaining the date of the training, participant names, and the instructor's signature?

A: Yes. For training courses conducted in a virtual environment, only the instructor's signature is required to verify course attendance for participating trainees. This has been added to the FY26 Program and Fiscal Guidelines.

Q: In submitting our final report, do we have to explain any unspent funds?

A: Yes. Any difference in the levels planned should be explained in your report. The business will be required to provide a match equal to 100% of the grant expenditures. If wages and benefits fall short of the match requirement, the business or the college will be responsible for making up the difference.

## 2 Projects in 5 Years Rule

Q: How many JSP projects can a college have in one funding cycle?

A: SBCTC places no limits to the number of JSP applications and grants a college can have in a single funding cycle. Check in with your business office – whomever processes things like invoices to OBIS, because there are workload impacts. This has been a limitation for other colleges, where their own business office says, "We can't do any additional grants this year."

Q: If a grant is for one year, does that change reapplication eligibility?

A: SBCTC has set the policy to count consecutive individual projects to the same business in the same biennium to only count as one (1) project.

## Open Licensing Policy

Q: The program guidelines' Open Licensing Policy state that all digital software, educational resources and knowledge produced as part of this competitive grant be placed under the Attribution license from Creative Commons. Does this mean that if part of the award is used for "development of new curriculum" or "enhancement of existing curriculum", those curricula would need to be made free to the public?

A: Yes. If part of the grant funds is used to develop or enhance curriculum, that content must be attributed with the Creative Commons Attribution license (CC BY 4.0).