NSTC CALL FOR PROPOSALS
Executed by Natcast, the operator for NSTC

NSTC WORKFORCE PARTNER ALLIANCE PROGRAM (WFPA)
Call for Proposals (CFP)

Issued July 1, 2024

Funding Opportunity Number: NAT-WF-24-0001

Revision History

Date	Author	Change
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1. Executive Summary

Funding Opportunity Title: NSTC Workforce Partner Alliance (WFPA) Program

Funding Opportunity Number: NAT-WF-24-0001

Key Dates:

- July 1, 2024: Application Period Opens
- July 9, 2024 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT): Question period closes
- July 26, 2024 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT): Application Period Closes
- Early Fall 2024: Anticipated announcement of awards

Description of Funding Opportunity:

The National Semiconductor Technology Center (NSTC) consortium was established by the CHIPS Act of the U.S. government as a public-private consortium. Natcast is a new, purpose-built, non-profit entity created to operate the NSTC consortium.

The NSTC will convene the U.S. government, allied and partner nations, and organizations across the semiconductor ecosystem—including academia and businesses of all kinds—to address the most challenging barriers to continued technological progress in the domestic semiconductor industry, including the need for a capable workforce. The NSTC reflects a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the U.S. to drive the pace of innovation, set standards, and re-establish global leadership in semiconductor design and manufacturing.

The NSTC has three strategic goals that bolster the aims of the CHIPS and Science Act:

1) Extend U.S. leadership in foundational technologies for future applications and industries and strengthen the U.S. semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem;
2) Significantly reduce the time and cost to prototype innovative ideas; and
3) Build and sustain a semiconductor workforce development ecosystem.

The NSTC Workforce Partner Alliance (WFPA) program seeks to invest in training and educational support for American workers, who are essential to extending U.S. leadership in foundational technologies and strengthening the U.S. semiconductor ecosystem. Through this program, the NSTC intends to fund projects or scale existing programs that address critical workforce needs within the semiconductor industry in the U.S. This program will specifically focus on closing workforce and skills gaps in the United States for researchers, engineers, and technicians involved in semiconductor design, manufacturing, and production.

The NSTC Workforce Partner Alliance program encourages a wide range of workforce solution providers[1] to apply, including established programs with a track record of success seeking to scale, growing programs seeking to expand or realign, and new programs that meet a previously unaddressed need, opportunity,

[1] Workforce solution providers are entities that provide education or training programs, products, activities, or wraparound support services (e.g., childcare), designed to prepare, encourage, motivate or enable individuals to obtain the skills or credentials required for, to enhance access to, or promote jobs offered by one or more employers.

or theory of change. All entities that provide semiconductor-related education or training programs, products, or activities developed to prepare, encourage, motivate, or enable individuals to obtain the skills or credentials required for semiconductor jobs (or otherwise enhance access to semiconductor jobs) are encouraged to apply.

Estimated Number of Awards: 4-10

Estimated Award Amounts: Awards are expected to be approximately $500,000 to $2,000,000 per award.

Estimated Period of Performance: One (1) to two (2) years, with preference for programs that have early impact.

Eligibility: Eligible entities for this program must have a presence in the United States. The program is open to for-profit and non-profit organizations that are incorporated in the United States (including U.S. territories) with their principal place of business in the United States (including U.S. territories), accredited institutions of higher education located in the United States, and U.S. state, territory, and local government agencies. Individuals and unincorporated businesses are not eligible, nor are foreign entities. Foreign entities of concern are also ineligible to participate in this CFP as members or unfunded collaborators.

Please refer to the detailed eligibility section of this document for more information regarding program eligibility requirements.

Public Website and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): https://natcast.org/workforce/wfpa

Contact Information: WFPA2024@natcast.org

2. Funding Opportunity Description

2.1 Introduction

While the United States remains a global leader in semiconductor design and research and development, it now accounts for only about 10 percent of global commercial production. Today, none of the most advanced logic and memory chips—the chips that power PCs, smartphones, and supercomputers—are manufactured at commercial scale in the United States. In addition, many elements of the semiconductor supply chain are geographically concentrated, leaving them vulnerable to disruption and endangering the global economy and U.S. national security.

The CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 provides the $52 billion for a suite of programs to strengthen and revitalize the U.S. position in semiconductor research, development, and manufacturing—while also investing in American workers.

Launching in Summer 2024, NSTC's Workforce Center of Excellence (WCoE) aims to ensure that individuals at all stages of life have access to education and training that prepares them for good jobs in the semiconductor industry. The WCoE will build a community of stakeholders and facilitate resource sharing among employers, educational institutions, and training providers, such as universities, community and technical colleges, labor unions, workforce development boards, and research organizations. The WCoE will identify and promote evidence-based, innovations and successful solutions, guide future WCoE

investments, and inform the development of capacity-building initiatives. Additionally, the WCoE will pilot new efforts and scale effective and equitable education and workforce development programs, including those serving underserved communities.

The NSTC Workforce Partner Alliance Program seeks to invest in training and educational support for American workers, who are essential to extending U.S. leadership in foundational technologies and strengthening the U.S. semiconductor ecosystem. Through this program, the NSTC intends to fund pilot projects or scale existing programs that address critical workforce needs within the semiconductor industry in the U.S. This program will specifically focus on closing workforce and skills gaps in the United States for researchers, engineers, and technicians across semiconductor design, manufacturing, and production.

2.2 Motivation

The semiconductor industry is facing significant workforce challenges as demand for semiconductor talent is expected to rapidly outpace the supply of skilled workers. Forecasting based on factors like current industry exit rates, training and education completion rates, and global talent migration patterns suggests that the industry will not be able to fill more than 67,000 of the 238,000 jobs the industry will create[2].

Supporting the current semiconductor workforce and building the workforce of tomorrow are critical to the health and competitiveness of the U.S. economy. Jobs in the industry range from researchers to engineers to technicians and can offer gainful employment across the nation to workers from all backgrounds. Making investments in the U.S. semiconductor workforce is an opportunity to serve underserved communities, to connect individuals to good-paying sustainable jobs across the country, and to develop a robust workforce ecosystem that supports an industry essential to the national and economic security of the U.S.

2.3 Goals and Objectives

Through this solicitation, Natcast aims to support a range of organizations working to meet critical workforce needs of semiconductor employers through education, training, and retraining opportunities. The NSTC Workforce Partner Alliance encourages a wide range of workforce solution providers to apply for this program, including established programs with a track record of success seeking to scale, growing programs seeking to expand or realign, and new programs that meet a previously unaddressed need, opportunity, or theory of change. All entities providing semiconductor-related education or training programs, products, or activities developed to prepare, encourage, motivate, or enable individuals to obtain the skills or credentials required for or enhance access to semiconductor jobs offered by one or more employers are encouraged to apply.

[2] Semiconductor Industry Association, “Chipping Away: Assessing and Addressing the Labor Market Gap Facing the U.S. Semiconductor Industry”, July 2023.

Illustrative examples of evidence-based workforce development strategies and methodologies that may be considered for this program include, but **are not** limited to initiatives that:

- Support paid work-based learning, including registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs;
- Issue industry-recognized credentials;
- Confer semiconductor industry-relevant degrees, such as undergraduate or graduate programs in computer engineering, electrical engineering, technology, informatics, computer programming, chemical engineering, or industrial engineering, offered by two- or four-year colleges or universities;
- Modernize or create curriculum, including with direct input from employers;
- Combine on-the-job training, industry-aligned curriculum, effective classroom instruction, mentorship, credentialing, and/or recognized wage gains for demonstrated skills milestones;
- Provide training integrated with wraparound supports that reduce barriers to entry in program participation (e.g. childcare or transportation, see below for more details); and
- Facilitate experiential learning opportunities such as worker cooperatives, externships, internships, or capstone projects.

Because of the diversity of workforce needs within the semiconductor industry, Natcast is seeking applications that are aligned with the demonstrated needs of one or more employers, who provide a commitment to support the program.

Applicants are encouraged to also consider how they may increase availability of local training and education programs through capacity building activities, including making investments to enhance the capacity and skills of educators, and to align training programs and curriculum to meet the needs of the semiconductor industry.

Applicants are encouraged to deploy wraparound supports where they will most effectively reduce barriers to entry in the design of their proposed programs. Wraparound support services or benefits may include emergency assistance, food assistance, internet, tutoring assistance, child/dependent care assistance, transportation assistance, healthcare (including mental health services), and tuition or training costs, directly or through collaboration with employers or community-based organization(s) that are meaningfully engaged with the underserved population(s) and community(ies) identified in the proposal.

Ultimately, the emphasis of this program will be on supporting initiatives that demonstrate their ability to directly serve individuals entering the semiconductor industry, including but not limited to workers, jobseekers and students.

Through this solicitation, Natcast anticipates making 4-10 awards ranging from $500,000 to $2,000,000 per project. The award period shall be proposed by the applicant with a length of one (1) to two (2) years and a strong preference for programs that achieve outcomes within the first twelve months, or in the case of academic institutions, in the 2024-2025 academic school year or summer session of 2025. All funded projects are expected to increase the number of individuals that are equipped with the necessary skills to

enter into the U.S. semiconductor workforce and/or to improve the availability of high-quality training programs for jobs in semiconductor design, manufacturing, and production in the United States.

Successful proposals will include project goals or objectives that are aligned with this solicitation's goals and objectives. For a complete list of factors to be considered in the review of applications, please see the "Proposal Process and Review Criteria" section of this solicitation.

2.4 Outcomes

Performance outcomes include the number of training, credential, and/or degree completers in programs aligned to semiconductor industry demand and the number of upskilled individuals hired by semiconductor employers. Outcomes may also include enrollment statistics, the number of underserved individuals enrolled, the number of semiconductor employers served, wraparound support offerings, uptake of wraparound support services, program location and geographic areas reached, certifications or degrees issued, and the earnings and other characteristics of the jobs into which trained workers are placed.

For a complete list of factors to be considered in the review of applications, including those related to targeted outcomes, please see the "Proposal Process and Review Criteria" section of this solicitation.

2.5 Schedule and Milestones

Applications Open	July 1, 2024
Question Period Closes	July 9, 2024 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)
Full Application Deadline	July 26, 2024 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)
Selection Notifications	Early Fall 2024
Activities Begin	To be proposed by applicant and subject to terms of final award
Milestones	To be proposed by applicant and subject to terms of final award

3. Eligibility Information

Natcast is seeking a wide range of domestic applicants ranging from established programs with a track record of success seeking to scale, growing programs seeking to expand or realign, and new programs that meet a previously unaddressed need, opportunity, or theory of change within the U.S. semiconductor workforce.

3.1 Eligible Applicants

- While entities are not required to be NSTC members at the time of application, Natcast will work with each awardee so they can become an NSTC member at the time of Award.
    - Only entities with a U.S. presence may be NSTC members. Members may not be foreign entities of concern or foreign countries of concern, as those terms are defined in 15 C.F.R. 231.104 and 231.102, respectively.

- Performers (those selected for awards) who are not NSTC members at the time of application will undergo vetting per the NSTC membership process and enter into a membership agreement with NSTC at the time of award.

- Additional information about NSTC Membership and the process for becoming a member will be available in the coming months. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to, domestic for-profit organizations; training providers; non-profit organizations; accredited institutions of higher education including community and technical colleges; labor unions; Manufacturing USA Institutes; Manufacturing Extension Partnerships centers; Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs); and state, local, territorial, and Indian tribal governments.
- Individuals and unincorporated sole proprietors are not eligible to receive funding.
- Foreign organizations may participate as members of a project team, as sub-performers or contractors, subject to Natcast approval.
- Consortia: This award requires a lead applicant to serve as the administrative and fiscal agent. Applicants with partner organizations (sub-performers) are encouraged to list proposed sub-performers in their award applications, budget applications (as appropriate), and may submit letters of commitment, MOUs, or other documentation showing conditional agreements contingent on the award.

3.2 Eligible Uses of Funds

The primary use of funds awarded under this CFP should support the development and implementation of education and training programs, with wraparound services as applicable, to prepare individuals for employment in good jobs in the semiconductor industry and supply chain in the United States.

Construction activities are not an allowable cost under this program. Additionally, performers may not charge profits, fees or other increments above cost to an award issued under this program. Applications for product development and/or commercialization will not be considered under this CFP.

3.3 Cost Sharing

Cost sharing is strongly encouraged but not required for this effort.

4. Proposal and Submission Information

4.1 Submission & Award Process

1. Applicants should identify an authorized representative, an individual who will complete the submission of documentation on behalf of the applicant.
2. Only one application per lead applicant will be accepted.
3. Applicant will be asked to upload documents through the Natcast grant application portal. Applicants must register an account in Natcast's grant application portal, to be made accessible at https://natcast.org/workforce/wfpa. The portal is best accessed through a recommended browser such as Google Chrome.

4. Applicants in the portal will complete an organization profile which will ask for the organization's Tax ID/EIN and basic information such as the organization's address, and the name, role, and contact information of the authorized representative. Applicants will also provide their Sam.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or should attest they have applied for a UEI from Sam.gov.
5. Applicants must certify a list of statements as a part of the application for this program hosted in the Natcast grant application portal. Failure to certify will result in the user being rejected and unable to proceed.
6. Following submission, applications will be referred for eligibility screening, merit review, and selection.
7. Applicants may be contacted for preliminary negotiations to adjust grant awards.
8. Awards may be announced prior to the execution of a final binding agreement, subject to the consent of the prospective performer.
9. Upon successful completion of award negotiations, applicants will be awarded and enter into a final binding agreement with Natcast as a performer.

4.2 Proposal Form and Content

Applicants will be required to provide the following components in their application for the Workforce Partner Alliance Program, unless noted below as optional:

1. Summary and contact information form fields in the Natcast application portal
2. A project abstract (must not exceed one page, or 500 words) as a single .doc, .docx or .pdf file
3. A mandatory project narrative, which must include descriptions of the following as a part of a single unified .doc, .docx or .pdf file:
    - Statement of Need (800 words or fewer)
    - Project Goals and Objectives (800 words or fewer)
    - Program Design (1600 words or fewer)
    - Scaling Model (800 words or fewer)
    - Inclusion and Accessibility (800 words or fewer)
    - Projected Outcomes (800 words or fewer)
    - Staffing Plan (800 words or fewer, excluding resumes for key personnel required to be under 500 words each)
    - Sustainability Plan (800 words or fewer)
    - Workplan (800 words or fewer)
4. An optional project narrative, which may include the following as a part of a single unified .doc, .docx or .pdf file:
    - Letters of Commitment (500 words or fewer each)
    - Description of Creation of Shared Resources (500 words or fewer)
5. A mandatory budget narrative as a single .xls, .xlsx or .csv file format
6. An optional budget narrative, as a single .doc, .docx or .pdf file, which may include:
    - Description of any involved cost sharing (500 words or fewer)

For full instructions and requirements related to the proposal content, see the annotated outline in Appendix A.

5. Proposal Process and Review Criteria

5.1 Process

Following submission, each application will be reviewed through the following process:

1. **Administrative Screening:** Applications received by July 26, 2024 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) will be reviewed to determine eligibility, completeness, and responsiveness to this solicitation. Applications will be assessed to confirm initial content is responsive to the requested scope of work. Applications determined to be ineligible, incomplete, and/or nonresponsive will be eliminated from further review. At its sole discretion, Natcast may opt to continue the review process for an application that is missing non-substantive information, the absence of which may easily be rectified during the review process.
2. **Merit Review:** Applications deemed eligible, complete, and responsive will be advanced for merit review by at least one independent, objective reviewers. All reviewers will have appropriate professional and technical expertise relating to the topics covered in this solicitation. Merit reviewers will evaluate each responsive application based on the merit review criteria noted in this solicitation, with appropriate recusals in place for any identified conflict of interests. Documentation including adjectival scoring from the Merit Review will be provided for selection consideration.
3. **Selection:** Complete applications with final merit reviews will be considered for a final selection. Natcast will select applications conditional on key Natcast priorities such as diversity in awarded institution type (i.e., small businesses, large businesses, higher education, other non-profits), diversity in regions, availability of funding, and similarity of scope within the portfolio (for a full list of factors to be considered, please see the “Review Considerations” section). Natcast employees, Federal partners or Merit Review committee members may be consulted as part of this process. Natcast reserves the right to make its selection based on its expertise and assessment of the environmental conditions and the objectives and resources of this award fund. During this phase, Natcast may also contact applicants to discuss possible scope, budget, outcome measures, or other similar adjustments in an effort to better align awards with the proposed objectives of this fund.
4. **Final Award and Announcement:** Natcast will collaborate with performers to establish a final award agreement and announcement. Award announcement may occur concurrently with award negotiations, subject to the permission of the performer. Applicants agree to not publish or disclose any information prior to receiving explicit permission from Natcast. Natcast anticipates making award announcements in the Fall of 2024.

5.2 Review Considerations

5.2.1 Merit Review Criteria

Proposals to this solicitation will be evaluated according to the following criteria during the merit review:

- **Commitment to the Department of Commerce and Department of Labor Good Jobs Principles:** Attestation and evidence that jobs into which trained workers are placed are consistent with the Good Jobs Principles. Supported by data or employer commitments, where possible.
- **Project Approach & Workplan:** Clarity, reasonability, and likely effectiveness of the approach in planning and execution of the proposed objectives and design. Likelihood of success based on the level of maturity selected. Compelling articulation of how the funds associated with the prospective award would uniquely enable the proposed program to be executed.
- **Workforce Ecosystem Alignment:** Ability to form meaningful partnerships and collaborations which result in addressing barriers to participation, de-duplicating programs and activities, creating portability of solutions, and building scalable and sustainable solutions. Ability of the program to produce free or low-cost resources that could be leveraged by other semiconductor workforce stakeholders and Natcast to build their capacity to support workforce programs and advance their workforce initiatives.
- **Employer-Led:** Clear articulation of role of employer partner(s) including leadership, advocacy for program, utilization of program including hiring of individuals who complete the training programs, participation in key inputs needed for success of the program, and support in fostering change management needed to utilize the program and how employers will be engaged meaningfully throughout the investment period.
- **Industry Alignment:** Potential to effectively meet the stated workforce needs of semiconductor employers, and maintain lasting relationships, based on the data and regional conditions described.
- **Community Impact:** Quality of the applicants' described strategies for engagement and improvement of outcomes of underserved communities, fostering partnerships with community organizations, executing effective recruitment and outreach strategies, ensuring program accessibility, and clearly communicating the anticipated economic and quality-of-life impact on the community.
- **Scale and Sustainability:** Assessment of the likelihood the program can move from its current conditions to grow its impact to serve more employers, more workers, more learners, and sustain beyond the life of the funding to create lasting economic and community impact. The number of people to be served by the program.
- **Utilization of Data:** Ability to gather, analyze, and act on quantitative and qualitative data to create a clear, measurable insight into the program and its proposed theory of change.
- **Budget Alignment with Proposed Work:** Assessment of the suitability and focus of the applicant's budget against the proposed activities. Budget projections are reasonable and appropriate for the scale of effort, anticipated level of resources, and level of maturity of the proposed program to be undertaken by the applicant.

- **Organizational Capacity:** The applicant's capacity and relevant experience for the work outlined in this solicitation include successful program management, staffing expertise, the ability to establish long-term program sustainability, and adept financial management throughout the term. Applicants must demonstrate that controls are adequate to ensure accountability and timely fiscal reporting, and to protect against incurring unallowed costs with grant funds. Applicants must demonstrate an adequate staffing plan, operational capacity, equipment, facilities and industry engagement to deliver on the proposed outcomes.
- **Evidence-Based Strategy:** The program narrative uses evidence to provide a compelling argument for the effectiveness of the proposed strategy.

5.2.2 Selection Criteria

Natcast will select a portfolio of proposals based on a broad range of criteria including:

- **Timeframe:** Preference for programs that achieve outcomes in the first year of funding, or in the case of academic institutions, in the 2024-2025 academic school year or Summer of 2025.
- **Diversity of Award Portfolio:** The final selection of programs awarded for this program will represent a diverse set of applicants and program proposals. The following types of diversity components will be considered in the final portfolio of awards made: region, communities impacted, type of job(s) served, type of solution provider(s) served (including academic institutions, state and local government, organized labor, and other training providers), type of company(ies) served, type of workforce solution provided (e.g., apprenticeship, non-degree credential, higher education).
- **Scale of Potential Impact:** Scale of the potential program's impact.
- **Alignment with Demand:** Degree to which the proposal effectively meets the workforce demand for semiconductor employers, especially through letters or other statements of commitment from employers.
- **Feasibility:** The program narrative uses evidence to provide a compelling argument for the feasibility of the proposed strategy.
- **Alignment with National Initiatives:** The applicant's performance under federal awards and the likelihood the program will align well with other national initiatives supporting the semiconductor industry.
- **Leveraged Funding Strategies:** Applicants who demonstrate the ability to identify and utilize funding strategies, such as by identifying and securing complementary sources of funding and leveraging public resources, to support learners and programs will receive strong preference. Additionally, sustainability beyond the grant period of performance is highly valued.
- **Availability of Funds:** Funds available to Natcast to support the project.

6. Award Administration Information

- **Registration Requirements for Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management:** Applicants must provide their UEI (formerly DUNS) number at the time of submission. For applicants who have not previously received a DUNS/UEI, applicants are asked to please register

with Sam.gov to request a UEI number. First-time registrants **do not need** a UEI number by the submission deadline. However, applicants must be able to demonstrate they have completed the initial registration process to secure a UEI. Upon award, applicants will be expected to maintain a Sam.gov profile following the issuance of a UEI by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). More information is available from GSA at https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration.

- **Submission of Award:** All applicants must submit applications via the Natcast application portal accessible at https://natcast.org/workforce/wfpa. Natcast will **not** accept applications submitted outside the portal by email, mail, facsimile, or other method.
- **Notification of the Award:** Natcast anticipates completing its review, selection, and notification to successful applicants by early fall of 2024. Applicants should expect awards to be announced in early fall of 2024. In the event that Natcast and the applicable Prospective performer are still negotiating the details of the Award prior to announcement, Natcast may announce the intended Performer, subject to the intended Performer's consent.
- **Announcement of Awards:** Natcast may publicly report summary information about awards.
- **Notification of Amendments or Changes:** Should Natcast amend this solicitation, information will be posted at https://natcast.org/workforce/wfpa with a summary of changes to the solicitation.
- **Period of Performance**: Natcast maintains discretion to modify and extend awards.
- **Reporting Requirements:** Performers will be expected to provide regular written qualitative and quantitative reports on performance. Performers should expect to provide at least quarterly reporting to Natcast and meet with Natcast staff on a monthly basis for progress update meetings. Performers may also be asked to present at future Natcast orchestrated webinars to share lessons learned and achievements related to the sponsored program with the broader NSTC community.
- **Intellectual Property:** Performers may be expected to identify any pre-existing IP (which may include patents, proprietary information, etc.) that will be used in completing the project and IP that may be developed with funding under the funding opportunity as a part of the award agreement.

6.1 Policy Requirements

- **Documentation Retention:** Performers must keep and retain records of all data generated through funded research which includes but is not limited to technical data, specifications, and software. In addition, performers must keep and retain all financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and other materials related to the award. These requirements apply for three (3) years following Natcast's final payment.
- **Tangible Property:** The acquisition of certain tangible personal property, including equipment and supplies, must comply with the requirements of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.313 and 314. Performers will also be required to record appropriate notices of record to indicate that personal property has been acquired or improved with federal funds and that use and disposition conditions apply to the property, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.316. For purposes of this CFP, these requirements apply to tangible personal property (including information technology systems), including equipment and supplies, having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the acquiring entity for

financial statement purposes, or $10,000. Performers may not use Award funds to acquire or lease real property or to engage in construction.

- **Accounting Standards**: Award agreements will require that Performers maintain proper GAAP accounting of all federal funds provided under the Award, as well as maintain commitment to any cost-sharing, if applicable.

6.2 Federal Requirements

Awards made under this CFP are made from federal funds Natcast receives under an "other transaction agreement" (OTA) with the Department of Commerce. These funds are not generally subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, 2 C.F.R. Part 200, or the Federal Acquisition Regulation. They are subject to requirements imposed via the OTA. The OTA requires that awards under this CFP include terms addressing the following:

- A prohibition on federal funds going to any foreign entities of concern or foreign countries of concern, as those terms are defined in 15 C.F.R. 231.104 and 231.102, respectively, or to any other entity debarred, suspended or otherwise prohibited from receiving federal funds;
- Compliance with export control laws;
- Compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments, and other non-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis race, color, national origin, handicap, age, religion, veteran status, or sex;
- Maintaining effective internal controls;
- Maintaining a System for Award Management (SAM) and ensuring that it is current, accurate, and complete;
- Providing access to records for examination, audit, investigation, or inspection by the Department of Commerce, a third party retained by the Department of Commerce, the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, or the Comptroller General. This requirement continues to apply for three (3) years after the final award payment, unless otherwise required by law;
- A certification to the best of its knowledge and belief that no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress on its behalf in connection with the making of an award under this CFP.
- For award funded travel, adherence to the Fly America Act at 49 U.S.C. § 40118, economy class travel 41 C.F.R. § 301-10.103, and GSA per diem and hotel rates (https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates) as outlined in Natcast's travel policy.

These requirements and others will be specified in award terms. Performers will be subject to sub-performer monitoring throughout the life of the award, which will include steps to ensure that performers comply with applicable requirements.

7. Natcast Contacts During Solicitation Period

Subject Area	Point of Contact
Programmatic Questions	WFPA2024@natcast.org
Press Inquiries	media@natcast.org

8. Terms and Conditions

Natcast will allocate awards to proposals at its discretion. Natcast's decisions will be final in matters related to the CFP. By submitting a proposal, proposers affirm that they have read, understood, and agreed to the terms and conditions contained in the CFP.

Natcast is not obligated to make an award as a result of the CFP process or the receipt of proposals in response to this CFP. Natcast's internal CFP process is flexible and may include, for example, requesting additional documentation from proposers, modifying the proposed budgets or scope of work for individual awards, or conducting further discussions with proposers as a part of the process.

Funds will only be made available after entering into a binding award agreement. Natcast may remove proposers from award consideration if the parties fail to reach agreement on award terms within a reasonable time or the proposer fails to provide requested additional information in a timely manner.

As a part of the CFP process, proposals and related information submitted under the CFP may be used, edited, modified, copied, reproduced, and/or distributed to Natcast employees, contractors, consultants, and external reviewers as well as the Department of Commerce or other Federal agencies and their contractors or consultants for the purposes of conducting the competition under this CFP. Persons requiring access will be subject to appropriate non-disclosure requirements.

Any parts of a proposal shared with Federal agencies may be subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552). Proposers are encouraged to mark as confidential any part of a proposal they believe is confidential, such as trade secrets or privileged or confidential commercial or financial information.

By submitting a proposal in response to this CFP, proposers represent and warrant that they have the authority to submit a proposal and grant the rights set forth in the CFP on behalf of their organization.

9. Appendix A

This outline describes the required structure of proposal content.

9.1 Proposal Formatting requirements

- **Font:** Use one of the following fonts:
  - Arial at a font size of 10 points or larger;
  - Times New Roma Calibri, or Aptos, at a font size of 11 points or larger; or
  - Calibri at a font size of 11 points or larger.
- **Line spacing:** Single
- **Margins:** One (1) inch top, bottom, left, and right
- **Page layout:** Portrait orientation
- **Paper size:** 8.5" by 11"
- **Application language:** English
- **Typed document:** All applications must be typed.
- **Accepted file types:**
  - For Project Abstract, Mandatory Project Narrative, Optional Project Narrative, and Optional Budget Narrative:
    - .DOC or .DOCX - Microsoft Word
    - .PDF – Adobe Portable Document Format
  - For Mandatory Budget Narrative:
    - .xls or .xlsx – Microsoft Excel
    - .csv – Comma-separated Values

9.1.2 Project Abstract

The project abstract should be submitted as a part of the uploaded Project Abstract file.

The project abstract must describe the occupational focus area and region; a synopsis of the program design; the project partners; and a description of the intended participants, including the expected number of participants who will be supported, including any underserved communities expected to be served. The project abstract should clearly delineate the project title and lead applicant organization. Applicants should draft the program overview in a manner that can be shared in public announcements. The overview should not include any proprietary information and should be acceptable for publication by Natcast as presented, if awarded.

The project abstract must not exceed one page in length, or 500 words.

9.1.3 Mandatory Project Narrative

The following components should be submitted as a part of the mandatory Project Narrative file. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to use the Natcast Project Narrative file template. All components listed below must be submitted as a part of a single, unified .doc, .docx or .pdf file. Applicants should clearly demarcate each component and subcomponent listed below in the file.

9.1.3.1 Statement of Need

As a part of the statement of need, applicants must include the following components:

- **Region:** Describe the targeted region(s), including relevant information on semiconductor employer(s).
- **Employer Need:** Applicants must articulate which semiconductor employer needs will be addressed through the execution of the proposed programs. Where appropriate, applicants are invited to provide insights into the labor demand landscape of the semiconductor industry in the designated geographic region and encouraged to provide letters of commitment or interest from potential employers who would benefit from the program and other analyses to build a compelling case for their program's theory of change and potential impact. This may include an overview of existing and projected employment in the semiconductor industry and projected wage and demand for selected occupation(s).

The statement of need should not exceed 800 words in length.

9.1.3.2 Project Goals and Objectives

As a part of the project plan, applicants must describe the project's goals and objectives. The description of goals and objectives should not exceed 800 words in length.

9.1.3.3 Program Design

Describe the type of program and services that will be provided, including the outreach and recruitment methods that will be used to identify and reach participants. Include any prior successes using these methods and explain how they will ensure goals are met. Clearly indicate the program's focus and theory of change. Include the type of program or design and its attributes, such as duration, skills to be acquired, credentials awarded and whether they are stackable, and alignment with a career pathway. Describe your approach to support learners in education and training through wraparound supports, as needed and which entity will provide the services. If the outreach and recruitment methods have been used before, describe the outcomes and lessons learned. Include the following components in the program design description:

- **Focus:** The design should clearly indicate the desired outcomes, such as bringing in new talent, retraining the current workforce, or building capacity such as models that increase the availability of regional training capacity. It should articulate the type of training program or design and its attributes, such as duration, skills to be acquired, stackable credentials awarded, and alignment with a career pathway. The program design should also include the planned service approach that will be used to support learners in education and training as needed and then in searching for and obtaining/retaining employment, and which entity will provide the services. All applicants must identify the selected occupational roles that are a focus of this grant, education/training levels needed for these roles, and the required skill sets to be addressed by the program.

- **Strategies:** Demonstrate how your approach addresses the challenges described in the Statement of Need's subsections. Include any referenced attributes and high impact practices.
- **Partners and Stakeholders**: Describe partners and stakeholders who will directly contribute to the program, will provide advice to the program, or are beneficiaries of the program, including their roles, responsibilities, contributions, or benefits from participation. Applicants should be able to articulate a clearly defined network of partners and/or stakeholders who either directly contribute to the program, advise the program, or are beneficiaries of the program. Stakeholders and partners should have a role, responsibility, contribution, or benefit from participation and should align within the program design and strategies. Applicants should address how the proposed partner and stakeholder network will address the workforce needs of employers while cultivating or enhancing ecosystems that value inclusivity and belonging and build networks into underserved communities and geographies. Applicants should identify relevant stakeholders such as:
    - State and local workforce boards
    - Training and educational entities
    - Higher education institutions,
    - Career and technical colleges
    - Labor Unions
    - Labor-Management Partnerships
    - Worker assistance centers
    - Professional associations
    - Community-based organizations
    - Partners offering wraparound support services such as housing, childcare, or transportation
    - States or local government entities
    - Economic development organizations
    - Chambers of commerce
    - Other key stakeholders in ensuring the success of the proposed project
- **Maturity of Program:** Indicate the option that best describes your program's level of maturity:
    - **Novel Innovator or Designer:** A new program design, concept, or limited pilot. Program lacks significant history, if any, but shows promising signs of benefit based on stakeholder input, regional conditions, available evidence, or other criteria. If the proposal is to fund a design or concept, the applicant demonstrates the conditions that make funding timing right.
    - **Early Market Incubator or Developer:** Existing program that operates on a small scale such as a single employer and/or single training provider with a small number of participants per year. The program has limited history, but some evidence of stakeholder engagement including employers and participants. Applicant can demonstrate how funding will be used to refine and scale program to meet semiconductor industry needs, serve more employers, or support more jobseeker/trainee participants.
    - **Late Market Leader and Implementor:** Existing program that operates at a moderate level of impact. Program has a few years of history, a selection or network of stakeholders, and

a track record of participant completions. Applicant can demonstrate how funding will be used to refine and scale program to meet semiconductor industry needs, serve more employers, or support more jobseeker/trainee participants.

- **Market Leader or Accelerator:** Program has a high degree of past success. Program likely has existing stakeholder network such as major employer investment, strong advisory board, formalized agreements, and significant track record of participant completion and job placement. Applicant demonstrates how investment will be used to increase scale, impact, or unlock new capacity. Examples include replicating existing high-performing model in a new region or tailoring a well-established program to the unique needs of the semiconductor industry.

The description of the program design should not exceed 1600 words in length in total across all these components.

9.1.3.4 Scaling Model

Proposals should also describe the potential for any models developed by the project to be scaled, challenges and limits to scaling the model, and how scalability could be achieved.

The description of the scaling model should not exceed 800 words in length.

9.1.3.5 Inclusion and Accessibility

Applicants should describe how they identify barriers to participation in the semiconductor industry workforce and prioritize strategies intended to alleviate barriers to entry into the semiconductor workforce. Describe the program's strategy for addressing barriers to entry and involving underserved communities by semiconductor workforce training or education programs. Explain how outreach methods will ensure inclusion and accessibility.

Description of how the program will alleviate barriers to participation should not exceed 800 words in length.

9.1.3.6 Projected Outcomes

Applicants should provide projected outcomes during the proposed period of performance using a table format with one or two columns indicating the outcome type, broken out across years of the program, if applicable. Applicants are invited to include additional outcomes measures. Anticipated outcomes must include, but are not limited to, numerical answers for the following, broken out across years of the proposed program if applicable, unless a specific response is not applicable:

- Anticipated number of individuals completing the proposed program
- Anticipated number of individuals to be placed in semiconductor industry jobs as a result of this program
- Anticipated number of individuals to be placed in semiconductor-relevant trainer or educator roles as a result of this program

The description of the program outcomes and the table should not exceed 800 words in length.

4.3.3.7 Staffing Plan

This section should address the staff and organization's capability to perform the work. It should include a description of the qualifications of the applicant organization, key personnel, the time commitments of the key personnel, their role in the project, and how the project staff qualifications will enable them to complete the project work. Staff from partner or sub-performer organizations should be included here if applicable. It should also describe the applicant's fiscal and administrative controls in place to manage grant funds and demonstrate that the controls are adequate to ensure accountability and timely fiscal reporting, and to protect against incurring unallowed costs with grant funds.

Applicants should demonstrate in their narrative, budget, and budget justification key roles, how roles will be funded, and how roles will be established (e.g., direct hires, contractors). For applicants without past award experience, the applicant should demonstrate a plan to establish this expertise such as partnerships with local entities that have applicable expertise.

In addition to the above staffing plan, applicants must submit resumes for each individual identified as key project personnel. Key project personnel are defined as all individuals who contribute in a substantive, meaningful way to the development or execution of the project. Consultant resumes should be included if they meet this definition.

Applicants must submit a resume for all identified key personnel that includes the following:

- **Contact information:** Email and/or phone number;
- **Education:** Include all academic institutions attended, major/area, degree;
- **Training:** e.g., certifications or credentials;
- **Professional experience:** Beginning with the current position, list professional/academic positions in reverse chronological order with a brief description;
- **Other:** List all current academic, professional, or institutional appointments, foreign or domestic, at the applicant institution or elsewhere, whether or not remuneration is received, and, whether full-time, part-time, or voluntary.

The description of the staffing plan should not exceed 800 words in length, excluding resumes.

Each resume should not exceed 500 words in length.

9.1.3.8 Sustainability Plan

Building sustainable partnerships is a key metric of success for this program. Proposals are required to have a plan to build and manage sustainable change (both within their respective organizations and across partnerships) so that partners and stakeholders can continue to provide or access pathways into promising semiconductor careers after the project's conclusion. The plan may include mechanisms to further the work by connecting expertise from multiple sectors and other private and public funders.

The description of the sustainability plan should not exceed 800 words in length.

9.1.3.9 Workplan

The workplan should include the components set forth below:

- **Period of Performance:** The applicant should define the period of performance for the award.
- **Task Descriptions:** The workplan should describe the work to be accomplished and how the applicant will achieve the milestones and accomplish the final project goals. The workplan should contain a concise description of the specific activities to be conducted over the life of the project.

The workplan should not exceed 800 words in length.

9.1.4 Optional Project Narrative

The following components can be submitted as a part of the **optional** Project Narrative file. All components listed below must be submitted as a part of a single, unified .doc, .docx or .pdf file. Applicants should clearly demarcate each component listed below in the file.

9.1.4.1 Letters of Commitment

Each formal partner organization and/or sub-performer cited by the lead applicant as providing services to support the program model and lead applicant must submit a Letter of Commitment.

Letters of Commitment must address the level of participation, qualifications of the personnel who will be actively involved, and how successful completion of this project would positively impact their profession or community. Letters must be signed by an individual with authority to legally bind the organization to its commitment.

Letters of Commitment must also specify any voluntary committed cost-share, including the specific services and/or products to be used in the project.

Letters of Commitment from at least one semiconductor employer are very strongly encouraged unless the application is submitted by a semiconductor employer and no other semiconductor employers are partnering on the proposal. Letters of commitment from semiconductor employers should detail any commitments to interview or hire applicants that participate in the proposed program.

Letters of Commitment from additional organizations including economic development organizations, industry intermediaries, employers, workforce intermediaries, unions, community-based organizations, civil rights or civic groups, and current regional partners not directly supporting the program model may be included in your application.

Each letter of commitment should not exceed 500 words in length.

9.1.4.2 Creation of Shared Resources

In this section proposers should clearly identify any communal resources that will be generated for reuse without restriction by other NSTC members or Natcast, or otherwise be made available through an openly available repository, to assist organizations with capacity building or understanding best practices in workforce development as a result of the proposed initiative.

This section should be submitted as a part of the optional Project Narrative file. This description should not exceed 500 words in length.

9.1.5 Budget Narrative Attachment

All applicant cost proposals/budget requests must be submitted as a part of a single uploaded spreadsheet. Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to use the Natcast Budget Narrative Workbook template available through the Natcast application portal.

NSTC intends to issue fixed amount awards under this program, rather than disbursing funding on a cost-reimbursement basis. The information provided in the 'Detailed Budget' tab of Natcast Budget Narrative Workbook template, or an equivalent location in the applicant's chosen mandatory budget narrative attachment format, will be used for the purposes of assessing reasonableness of proposed milestone payment amounts. Applicants must articulate proposed programmatic milestones tied to proposed funding disbursement amounts in the 'Milestone Payment Schedule' tab of the budget workbook, or an equivalent location in the applicant's chosen mandatory budget narrative attachment format.

Justifications for expenditures should be outlined in detail on the "Detailed Budget" tab of the recommended Natcast Budget Narrative Workbook template, in the far-right column marked "Justifications," or an equivalent location in the applicant's chosen mandatory budget narrative attachment format. All information must align with the amounts being requested for that individual line item and funding levels must be consistent with the project scope and allowable costs.

A. **Direct Labor:** The budget justification for all staff/personnel should include the following: Job title, commitment of effort on the proposed project in terms of average number of hours per week or percentage of time, salary rate, description of the role of the individual on the proposed project and the work to be performed.
B. **Fringe Benefits:** Provide the blended fringe rate, indicate what types of costs roll up into the fringe and the percentage each cost represents of the total fringe.
C. **Equipment:** The budget justification should list each piece of equipment, the cost, and a description of how it will be used and why it is necessary for the successful completion of the proposed project.
D. **Travel:** For all travel costs, the budget justification for travel should include the destination; number of people traveling; duration; estimated transportation, lodging and per diem rates; and a description of how the travel is directly related to the proposed project. For travel that is yet to be determined, please provide the best estimates based on prior experience. This should not be charged under another cost category.
E. **Other Direct Costs:** For costs such as supplies, printing, publications, postage, shipping, software license or subscription fees, printing, and publications. This can include fewer common items that do not have a specific heading within the budget template. Include an explanation of the necessity of the cost for the completion of the proposed project.
F. **Contractual (i.e., Contracts or Consultants):** Each contract or consultant should be treated as a separate item. Identify the cost (daily rate x period) or fixed fee and describe the services to be provided and the necessity of contract to the successful performance of the proposed project.

Contracts are for obtaining goods and services for use on the project and creating a procurement relationship with the contractor. Examples of contractual or consultant costs include but are not limited to contractual arrangements with software development firms, marketing consulting costs, procurement support services, software licenses, insurance, and other subject matter expert consulting fees.

G. **Subaward (i.e., sub-performer):** Each subaward should be treated as a separate item. Identify the entity, cost, and describe the scope of work to be provided by the performer and the necessity of the subaward to the successful performance of the proposed project. A subaward is for the purpose of carrying out a portion of an Award.
H. **Indirect/Overhead Rates**: Commonly referred to as F&A, Overhead, Indirect Cost Rates, Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), or diminimus in lieu of NICRA (10%) are defined as costs incurred by the applicant organization that cannot otherwise be directly assigned or attributed to a specific project. The justification should include a cost calculation that reflects the applicable indirect cost rate. (If using a NICRA, indicate if it is MTDC and what costs are excluded from the calculation).

Payments will be issued based on programmatic milestones. Applicants must articulate proposed programmatic milestones tied to specific funding disbursement amounts, expressed as a percentage of the total award amount. Payment milestones should be outlined in detail on the "Milestone Payment Schedule" tab of the recommended Natcast Budget Narrative Workbook template or an equivalent location in the applicant's chosen mandatory budget narrative format.

Milestones will be used to negotiate payments and payment schedule with Natcast, if selected. Applicants may include proposed milestones to stand up programs, such as an initial advance payment. Milestones should represent significant operational achievements or deliverables – such as payments for completion of training curriculum – and major performance outcomes, such as completion of cohort training, enrollment of participants into jobs, or similar activities in alignment with the proposed scope, as described in their application. Milestones must be for a verifiable product, task, deliverable or goal of the recipient. Milestone payments are based on programmatic deliverables and may not necessarily be tied to exact funds expended. The maximum total allowable award amount across all milestone payments in association with each award made under this program will be $2,000,000.

9.1.6 Optional Budget Narrative

9.1.6.1 Cost Sharing

Natcast considers any resources contributed to the project beyond the funds provided by the award as leveraged resources or cost share, which should support the overall sustainability of the effort. Applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage additional funds to support the project, but leveraged resources are not required. Leveraged resources can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, employers, industry associations, labor organizations, community-based organizations, education and training providers, philanthropic organizations, and/or state and local government programs. but leveraged resources are not required. Leveraged resources can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, employers, industry associations, labor organizations, community-based organizations,

education and training providers, philanthropic organizations, and/or state and local government programs.

Cost sharing information should be submitted as a part of any uploaded **optional** Budget Narrative. Descriptions of any cost sharing involved in the project should not exceed 800 words in length.