

Path to Trades Non-Colleges

Request for Proposal

This is a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) from the City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL).

Funding Contingency

DEEL reserves the right to modify, delay, or cancel awards based on Council action or changes to available funding. DEEL will not provide individual notice of changes, and applicants are responsible for regularly checking the DEEL funding webpage for updates, clarifications, or amendments.

Table of Contents

Summary of Opportunity	2
1. Investment Purpose	4
2. Funded Services	5
3. Provider Eligibility	6
4. Participant Eligibility	7
5. Contracting Requirements and Ongoing Responsibilities	7
6. Funding and Payment	8
7. Evaluation and Scoring	9
8. Application Process	11
Appendices	13
Appendix A – Requirement to Contract with the City	13
Appendix B – Data Reporting Requirements	15
Appendix C – Appeals Process and Public Records	18

Summary of Opportunity

Purpose

This RFP seeks proposals from providers to offer a pathway to alternative postsecondary opportunities and increase trades training and career opportunities for Seattle public high school students. The Path to Trades Non-Colleges investment is designed to increase student awareness of trades career opportunities, access to trades career pathways, and the number of youth in living-wage trades careers. This investment is funded by the Every Child Ready—Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy.

Funding Amount

- Total funding available: \$627,666
- Expected number of awards: Determined based on qualified proposals received
- Funding amount per provider: Determined based on qualified proposals received
- Contract length: February 16, 2027 – August 31, 2028

Funded Services

- Career preparation, outreach, and completion support: Instruction and training, professional skill building, certifications, pre-apprenticeships, and/or apprenticeship programs; youth engagement, field trips; advising, mentorship, and/or competency readiness
- Financial support: Scholarships up to \$1,500 for tools, supplies, or other required program or professional items; other financial support such as stipends, tuition or fees

Provider Eligibility

- Provides support for entry to trades career pathways at one of the following institutions:
 - Washington state-accredited educational institutions
 - Washington state-registered apprenticeship programs
 - Washington state-accredited training providers

Participant Eligibility

- Seattle public high school 11th and 12th grade students

Outcomes

- Increase number of students in living-wage trades careers
- Increase number of students completing trades career training or degrees
- Increase number of students participating in trades certificate, credential, pre-apprenticeship, or apprenticeship programs
- Increase number of students prepared for trades career pathways
- Increase financial supports for students to access trades career pathways
- Increase student knowledge of trades career pathways

Service Target

- To be proposed by applicant

Timeline

- RFP opens: October 21, 2026
- Application deadline: November 17, 2026, 11:59 PM
- Award notification: January 11, 2027
- Contract start: February 16, 2027

Application and Questions

- Apply via Submittable Link: [Apply Here](#)
- Questions: Send to DEELFunding@seattle.gov with subject line: “Question: Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP” before November 12, 2026.

1. Investment Purpose

The Every Child Ready-FEPP Levy, Ready to Launch domain funds investment strategies designed to contribute to increased access to and utilization of postsecondary opportunities that promote attainment of a certificate, credential or degree for Seattle students. The Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP is a Career Pathways investment within the Ready to Launch domain.

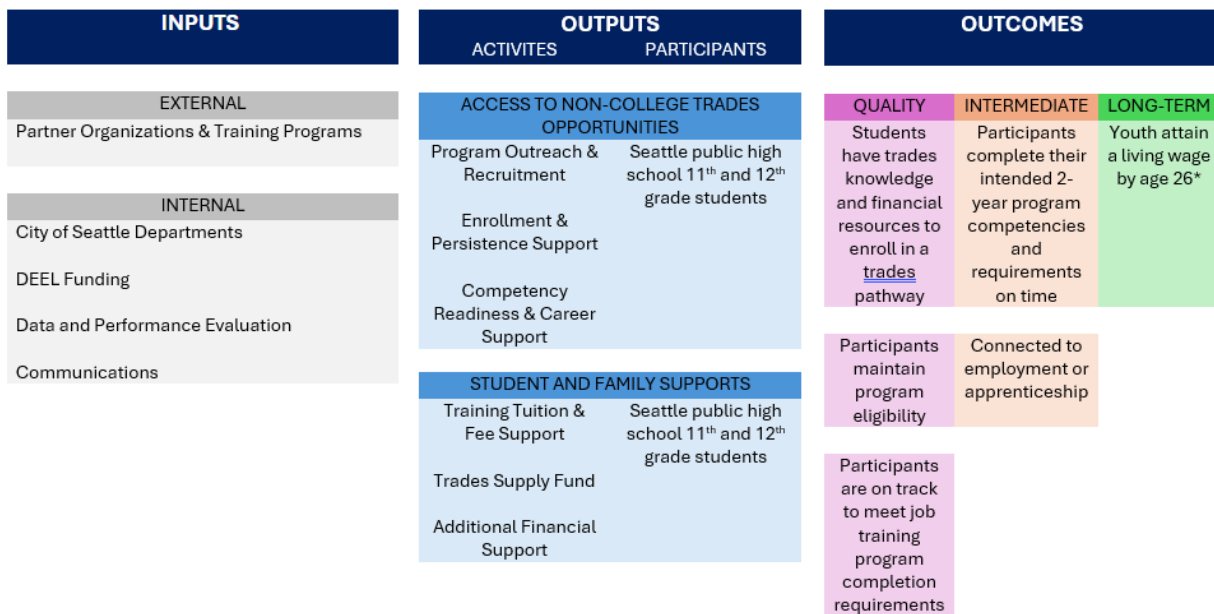
Analysis and stakeholder engagement conducted by DEEL-identified inequities in the college and career sector that significantly impact students' ability to earn a certificate, degree, or credential. Key findings include: (1) formal credentials, such as certifications and apprenticeships, consistently raise earnings by 50-100%; (2) trades careers have low percentages of Black/African American workers and professionals in leadership positions; (3) youth exploring trades career pathways frequently encounter barriers such as low trades competency readiness, high start-up costs for materials, and systemic hiring inequities. For additional information, please review the [Path to Trades Racial Equity Toolkit](#) and [Stakeholder Engagement Report](#) completed as part of the Every Child Ready-FEPP Levy renewal legislative process.

For this RFP, a trades career is defined as an occupation that requires specialized training and an industry-recognized credential that is developed through structured applied learning opportunities and awarded by an accredited or state-registered provider.

As shown in the Theory of Change below, the intended long-term outcome of the Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP is to increase the number of youth in living-wage careers. Programs should positively impact the following outcomes:

- Knowledge of trades career pathways
- Financial support to enter trades career pathways
- Participation in trades career pathways such as training, certificate, credential, degree, pre-apprenticeship, or apprenticeship
- Persistence and completion of trades career pathway program
- Trades career employment

Image 1. Path to Trades Non-Colleges Theory of Change



*Ready to Launch investments may serve students and youth up to age 24, but outcome indicators will measure up to age 26.

2. Funded Services

The Path to Trades Non-Colleges investment requires funded organizations to provide access to trades career pathways through a variety of services; providers are not required to provide all activities.

This RFP invests in two types of services:

1. Career preparation, outreach, and completion support: Instruction and training, professional skill building, certifications, pre-apprenticeships, and/or apprenticeship programs; outreach, youth engagement, field trips; advising, mentorship, and/or competency readiness
2. Financial support: Scholarships up to \$1,500 for tools, supplies, or other required program or professional items; other financial support such as stipends, tuition or fees

Services may be offered in-person or through a combination of in-person and virtual formats. Fully virtual or remote programs are not eligible for funding.

This RFP will prioritize training programs that lead to living-wage trades careers, providers who offer prioritized access and selection to apprenticeship placements after completion of program and providers who have direct connection with trades employers.

The Living Wage Calculator provides the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support themselves, working full-time or 2080 hours per year in King County [[Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for King County, Washington](#)].

The [WA ESD Occupation In-Demand list](#) provides trades occupations rated as in-demand in King County. These occupations are likely to have more employment opportunities [[Learn about an occupation | Employment Security Department](#)].

3. Provider Eligibility

Providers must support participant entry to trades career pathways at one of the following institutions:

- Washington state-accredited educational institutions
- Washington state-registered apprenticeship programs
- Washington state-accredited training providers

Washington state-accredited educational institutions are accredited in Washington through a third-party accreditor, such as [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities \(NWCCU\)](#).

Washington state-accredited educational institutions that offer trades training programs are eligible to apply to Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP on their own or as a training partner with another provider.

Washington state-registered apprenticeship programs are apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeship prep programs registered and approved through [WA Labor and Industries \(LNI\)](#).

Washington state-accredited training providers must provide proof of accreditation from accredited agencies or Washington state-registered trades training providers, including but not limited to those approved by one of the following:

- [Workforce Training & Coordinating Board](#)
- [Washington Student Achievement Council](#)
- [State Board for Community and Technical Colleges](#)
- [Federal Aviation Administration](#)
- [Department of Licensing](#)
- [Career Bridge - ETPL](#)
- [Career Connect Washington - Career Launch Program](#)
- [OSPI](#)

Applicants must demonstrate how funded activities are connected to investment outcomes. Providers offering financial and academic support must clearly state how funds will be used and distributed, and provide documentation to DEEL.

Applicants to this RFP must address the following funding requirements:

- Articulate their engagement strategy to reach eligible program participants
- Demonstrate how the program or services connect students to trades career pathways services
- Describe student support during program, including how the program will increase access, retention, completion, and/or address existing inequities in access to trades career pathways

- Demonstrate how the program connects or prepares students for employment in the trades or to qualify for additional training, apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, or apprenticeship opportunities

This RFP will prioritize providers that offer apprenticeship or employment placements after program completion. If applicable, applicants must demonstrate how the program is connected to an apprenticeship or employer, as well as how those connections or partnerships will lead to employment after program completion.

4. Participant Eligibility

Providers must serve Seattle public high school 11th and 12th grade students. High school students enrolled in Path to Trades Non-Colleges programs funded by this RFP may continue to participate in the program after graduation.

Providers are encouraged to partner with Seattle Public Schools (SPS) and public charter schools or other organizations that serve students as part of their outreach strategy and training service model.

To address inequities and close opportunity gaps in access to trades pathways and employment, applications with a demonstrated history of effectively serving the following priority populations are encouraged to apply:

- Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students
- Students who would be the first in their family to enter a trades career (first-generation trades career professionals)
- Women and people with gender identities underrepresented in trades professions

5. Contracting Requirements and Ongoing Responsibilities

If selected, funding will be provided through a contract that includes the following requirements.

5.1 Pre-contract Requirements

Selected providers must be able to meet all City contracting requirements prior to contract start including business licensing and registration, insurance requirements, etc. (see Appendix A for detailed requirements).

5.2 Reporting

Contracted providers will be required to report data on implementation, service quality, and outcomes on a bi-annual and quarterly basis, including measures in the following categories:

- Participants served and demographics
- Program quality and outcomes, including participant survey and measures of program completion and employment outcomes

See Appendix B for detailed requirements.

5.3 Program Monitoring and Continuous Quality Improvement

DEEL uses a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to support early problem-solving, clear expectations and shared learning with providers. CQI means that DEEL and providers set goals together and regularly review progress to make sure services stay strong and improve over time.

CQI Approach

Upon contracting, selected providers will work with DEEL to establish implementation and performance targets. Sample performance indicators may include:

- Total number of program participants served in Year 1
- Percent and/or total number of completers connected to employment or apprenticeship within six months of completion

During the implementation period, providers will participate in the following engagement and reflection activities with DEEL to support shared problem solving as needed to maintain progress toward goals:

- Host a minimum of two DEEL site visits annually
- Participate in a minimum of two data reflection meetings with DEEL annually. Data reflections include discussing progress on key implementation and performance benchmarks, addressing any implementation barriers, and developing CQI goals or performance improvement plans as applicable
- Use data to improve service delivery and quality according to targets and CQI goals developed with DEEL
- Participate in planned levy evaluations during contracted years conducted by either DEEL or third-party consultants

Provider Engagement & Supports

DEEL may support providers to strengthen outreach, coordination, and service delivery through structured systems and ongoing engagement. DEEL will collaborate with providers on:

- Career connection and networking strategies for students, connection to City of Seattle careers, regional employers, and workforce development initiatives
- Outreach and engagement strategies, including improving access points and reaching priority populations
- Regular check-ins, data review, and problem-solving to address access, engagement, and service delivery challenges

6. Funding and Payment

Approximately \$628,000 is available through 2028 and will be awarded for programming that occurs February 2027 through August 2028. Successful applicants will receive 18 months of funding for programming. Awards and contract execution depend on Council action and available funding. DEEL may modify, delay, or cancel awards if funding changes. Applicants must check the DEEL funding webpage for updates, clarifications, and amendments.

- Total funding available: \$627,666

- Combined award budgets will not exceed \$564,899. This is equivalent to 90% of the funding total and will support Base Costs (see 6.1 Performance-Based Contracting)
- The remaining \$62,767, 10% of the funding total, will be included in contracts as Performance Pay (see Section 6.1 Performance-Based Contracting)
- Expected number of awards: Determined based on qualified proposals received
- Funding amount per provider: Determined based on qualified proposals received
- Contract length: February 16, 2027 – August 31, 2028

6.1 Performance-Based Contracting

DEEL uses performance-based contracting to ensure that public dollars are directly tied to measurable improvements in the lives of families and students. Performance-based contracting creates accountability and helps ensure that public investments lead to meaningful, equitable change for children, youth, and families across the city.

This RFP will fund a total contract award that includes 90% base payment and 10% performance pay.

- Base payment is the minimum payment a provider will receive and is earned by meeting contract requirements such as achieving minimum service standards, data reporting, and participation in required continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities.
- Performance pay is earned payment tied to achievement of up to five measurable investment outcomes. Performance pay measures and targets are negotiated between DEEL and the awardee following the RFP process. Awardees may earn full or partial performance pay dependent on the achievement of outcome measures and targets.

7. Evaluation and Scoring

7.1. Evaluation Process

Eligibility Review

Applicants are responsible for reviewing the eligibility criteria (see Section 3, page 6) before applying and must indicate that they meet all criteria at submission. DEEL will review applications to confirm that eligibility requirements are met. Applications that DEEL determines do not meet the eligibility criteria will not proceed to further review. If DEEL determines an application does not meet the eligibility criteria, the applicant will be notified in writing.

Review Panel

Eligible applications will be reviewed by a review panel. Proposals will be assessed through the lens of the priority criteria. The review panel will score and rank proposals from highest to lowest. Application scores and review panel discussions will inform review panel recommendations for funding awards.

Final Decision

DEEL will consider standardized scoring based on application of the scoring rubric, review panel recommendations, FEPP Levy investment alignment, and other department priorities such as applicant capacity, performance, and alignment with levy outcomes. Final decisions regarding selection of proposals will be made by the DEEL Director based on these factors. DEEL will notify

each applicant of the decision. Applicants may appeal the decision as outlined in Appendix C within four (4) business days of award status notification. Notice of selection does not guarantee funding or award of agreements. Funding is conditioned upon successful completion of contract negotiation as outlined in Section 5 and compliance with the requirements in Appendix A.

Contract Negotiation

If a proposal is selected for funding, the authoring organization should be prepared to collaborate with DEEL to finalize a workplan based on their submitted proposal, which will be incorporated into the final contract. These aspects include, but are not limited to, the amount of funding, proposed programming and/or services, program participation, and performance measures.

DEEL Reserved Rights

DEEL reserves all rights not expressly stated in the RFP, including the right to reject all proposals and cancel the RFP, award partial funding, and negotiate with any proposers regarding the amount of funding and other terms of any contract resulting from this RFP. DEEL also reserves the right, but not the obligation, to waive immaterial defects in any proposal and to seek clarification from a proposer. If DEEL and any funding candidate selected under this RFP are unable to come to agreement on a final contract, DEEL may, in its discretion, choose not to provide funding or choose to select the next highest ranked candidate for contract negotiation.

7.2. Scoring Criteria for Review Panel Consideration

The scoring categories, points, and strong applicant criteria will be leveraged by a funding panel to review applicants to the RFP.

Table 1. Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP Scoring Categories and Points	
Scoring Category	Points
Experience & Program Model	20
Living Wage	10
Career Pathways	20
Data Collection Capacity	10
Participants and Equity Strategy	20
Evidence of Service Quality & Outcomes	20
Total Points	100

Table 2. Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP Scoring Details		
Category	Points	What a strong applicant looks like
Experience & Program Model	20	- Describes a clear existing or planned model(s) of access to trades opportunities and student supports that result in career exploration, skill building, and career connection - Describes outreach and engagement plan including existing relationship with SPS, charter schools, community-based organizations, or other partnerships¹ - Model links strategies to evidence-based practices

¹ Any services that are planned to be implemented in SPS must adhere to District policies and processes

		- Applicant demonstrates strong evidence of experience providing supports related to trades careers - Prioritization for services that can be delivered before the 27-28 SY
Living Wage	10	Demonstrates living wage for trained workers in trade occupation or industry via publicly available or internal industry data source
Career Pathways	20	- Provides prioritized access and selection for registered apprenticeship program(s) - Demonstrates direct connection and partnership with an employer/employers leading to career attainment for students - Expands access to City of Seattle job opportunities in the trades - Demonstrates provider is a Washington state-accredited training provider (see Section 3, page 6)
Data Collection Capacity	10	Demonstrates existing capacity and/or plans to increase capacity to collect quantitative and qualitative data from participants and meet DEEL reporting requirements (see Appendix B)
Participants and Equity Strategy	20	- Describes how program model will close an identified inequity or opportunity gap through specific and intentional services and supports - Describes specific priority population(s) that provider is positioned to serve and demonstrates relationship with priority populations served - Describes specific results from previous work and programming with priority populations
Evidence of Service Quality & Outcomes	20	- Provides evidence of prior impact showing how students benefit from services (see “Program Quality and Outcome Data” measures in Table 5) - Evidence of ability to maintain sustained relationships with students for duration of program
Total Points	100	

8. Application Process

Submit your application through Submittable: [Apply Here](#)

Important notes

- By applying, you are confirming that you have reviewed the entire RFP and understand its contents. Questions or concerns about the RFP content, scoring, or award process must be submitted to DEEL by the Deadline for Questions in Table 3 below.

- Applications must be submitted by the deadline. Late applications will not be accepted as Submittable portal automatically closes.
- Questions must be submitted via email to DEELfunding@seattle.gov. Include “Question: Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP” in the subject line by November 12, 2026.

Information Sessions

You can join two (2) Information Sessions to help you understand this RFP and apply using the application portal Submittable; see Table 3 for detailed timeline dates below.

All materials and updates will be posted on [DEEL’s Funding Opportunities webpage](#). Please check the webpage regularly for updates or changes.

Table 3. Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP Detailed Timeline	
Event	Date(s)
RFP opens	October 21, 2026
RFP Information Sessions	October 26, 2026 November 4, 2026
Question and Answer Period	October 21– November 12, 2026
Last Day to Submit Questions	November 12, 2026
Application Deadline	November 17, 2026 at 11:59 pm
Application Review, Scoring, and Deliberation Period	November 18– December 18, 2026
Award Notification	January 11, 2027
Contract Start	February 16, 2027

Appendices

Appendix A – Requirement to Contract with the City

Contracting Readiness

Selected providers must meet all City of Seattle contracting requirements before a contract can begin. Common barriers for new providers include Sexual Abuse and Molestation insurance. Please review Appendix A before applying. Failure to meet these requirements two weeks before contract start date (anticipated to be February 2027) may delay or prevent contracting.

Successful applicants will enter a contract for services with the City of Seattle and will need to adhere to the following contractual conditions. Conditions may be amended, or additional requirements may be included during the contract negotiation process.

Documentation

Applicants selected for funding **must** submit the following documents to DEEL:

- **Business license numbers.** The contracting organization must meet all licensing requirements that apply to its organization. The contracting organization must license, report and pay revenue taxes for the Washington State Business License (UBI#) and Seattle Business License, if they are required by the laws of those jurisdictions. For more information: [Business Licenses - City Finance | seattle.gov](https://seattle.gov/cityfinance/businesslicenses)
- **Recently signed W-9 form.** The contracting organization must have a Federal Tax ID number/employer identification number (EIN) to facilitate payments from the City of Seattle to the provider. Link to form - <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>
- **An ACORD certificate of insurance and Additional Insured Endorsement** or Blanket Policy Wording showing the City of Seattle as an additional insured.
- **Maintain the following insurance coverage**, at a minimum:
 - a. **Commercial General Liability (CGL)** or equivalent insurance including coverage for: Premises/Operations, Products/Completed Operations, Personal/Advertising Injury, Contractual and Stop Gap/Employers Liability (coverage may be provided under a separate policy). Minimum limit of liability shall be:
 - i. \$1,000,000 each occurrence Combined Single Limit bodily injury and property damage (“CSL”)
 - ii. \$2,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate
 - iii. \$2,000,000 General Aggregate
 - iv. \$1,000,000 each accident/disease—policy limit/disease—each employee stop gap/Employer’s Liability
 - v. \$1,000,000 Abuse and Molestation required if working with children ages 0-17
 - b. **Automobile Liability insurance** for owned, non-owned, leased or hired vehicles, as applicable, written on a form CA 00 01 or equivalent with minimum limits of liability of \$1,000,000 CSL.
 - c. **Worker's Compensation insurance** for Washington State as required by Title 51 RCW.
- **Maintain financial and program records, documents, and other evidence** directly related to performance of the work in accordance with Generally Acceptable Accounting

Procedures. The City of Seattle, or any of its duly authorized representatives, shall have access to such books, records and documents for inspection, audit, and copying for a period of six (6) years after completion of work.

Appendix B – Data Reporting Requirements

Provider Reporting Requirements

Data Reporting

Providers are required to submit data quarterly. Quarterly reporting of participant data and narrative reporting is due two weeks after the end of each quarter; quarters are based on the calendar year. Bi-annual reporting (Quarter 2 and Quarter 4) will include provider data, program quality, and program outcomes.

Table 4. Quarterly and Bi-Annual Reporting Due Dates	
Quarter: Service Period*	Provider Reporting
Q1: January-March	April 15
Q2: April-June	July 15
Q3: July-September	October 15
Q4: October-December**	January 15
*Quarterly service period and reporting dates will be adjusted to accurately reflect contract start and end dates	
**Q4 2028 service period will not be applicable due to contract term	

Table 5. Path to Trades Non-Colleges Grantee Reporting Requirements		
Reporting Category	Measures	Data Source
Participant Data		
Participant Enrollment	# of new participants enrolled per reporting period	Provider administrative data (aggregate)
Eligibility	# Participants maintaining program eligibility per reporting period	
Participant & Eligibility Demographic Characteristics	Participant Enrollment & Eligibility by the following subgroups - Race/ethnicity - Gender - Age - Primary language spoken at home - Zip code - High School enrolled in or graduated from (as applicable)	
Program Quality and Outcome Data		
Participant Satisfaction and perceptions of program quality	% of participants satisfied with the program % of participants responding positively to questions about program training, staffing, competency readiness, and career supports - Participant self-reported outcomes/benefit from program services	Participant Survey
Program Tuition, Fees, and Supplies	# served \$ Average costs	Provider administrative data (aggregate)
Retention	# Participants on track to meet job training program requirements or successfully completed training by Year 1	
Program Completion	% Completing Program	
Employment	# Employed in their field of apprenticeship within six (6) months of completion - Median \$ earnings of completers	
Retention, Program Completion, Employment Demographic Characteristics	Participant Retention, Program Completion, and Employment by the following subgroups - Race/ethnicity - Gender - Age - Primary language spoken at home - Zip code - High School graduated from (as applicable)	
Connection to Employment	# Connected to Employment, Apprenticeships or continuing training	
Program Exits	# of participants exiting without completing	

	• # of participants exiting without completing and employed	
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Narrative Reporting

Providers will be asked to submit quarterly narrative reports. Reporting topics may include but are not limited to the following:

- Reflection on general implementation progress and challenges
- Documentation of outreach and engagement activities

Appendix C – Appeals Process and Public Records

Appeals Process

The Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) will notify applicants in writing of the outcome of the applicant's proposal submission. Written notification will be sent via email to the email address specified in your application. Any applicant wishing to appeal the decision, including a decision that the proposal does not meet eligibility requirements, must do so in writing within four (4) business days of the email notification of DEEL's decision. An appeal must clearly state a rationale based on one (or more) of the following criteria only:

- Violation of policies or guidelines established in the RFP process
- Failure to adhere to published criteria and/or procedures in carrying out the RFP process

Appeal Limitations:

- Disagreeing with the outcome alone is not a valid reason to appeal the decision and will not be considered.
- Any appeal that is based on a concern or alleged flaw with the scoring or content of the RFP will be rejected unless the concern is raised by the applicant before the last day to submit questions.
- Failure to appeal within the time required waives the right to appeal.

How to submit an appeal:

- Send your appeal by email to: DEELFunding@seattle.gov with the Subject line: Path to Trades Non-Colleges RFP Appeal

What happens next:

- The DEEL Director (or designee) will review the written appeal. We may request additional information from you if needed. You will receive a written decision from the DEEL Director (or designee) and this decision is final. If DEEL receives a timely appeal of its award decision, DEEL will wait at least one business day after the Director's final decision before executing a contract.

Public Records

PUBLIC RECORDS The City is a public agency subject to the requirements of the Washington State Public Records Act (RCW Chapter 42.56, the "Act"). Under the Act, applications and documents submitted to the City in response to this RFP, including documents submitted electronically, are public records. If the City receives a request for public records submitted in response to this RFP, DEEL will release the records unless DEEL determines, in its discretion, that an exemption applies.

DEEL requests that proposers refrain from requesting proposal documents until DEEL provides notice of funding decisions. This is intended to protect the fairness of the evaluation process. With this preference stated, the City will continue to respond to requests in the manner required under the Act. For more information, see the Washington State Legislature's website at Chapter 42.56 RCW: PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (wa.gov). You may also contact DEELFunding@seattle.gov.

Marking Your Records Exempt from Disclosure

If you believe that any of the records you are submitting to DEEL as part of your proposal are exempt from disclosure under the Act, you may request that DEEL notify you before releasing the document(s). To do so you must very clearly identify each document that you believe is exempt and provide the reason at the time you submit the document to DEEL. If DEEL receives a public disclosure request for any records you have clearly marked as exempt, DEEL will notify you in writing of the request. While it is not a legal obligation, DEEL will, as a courtesy, allow you up to ten business days to obtain a court injunction to prevent the City from releasing the records (see RCW 42.56.540). If you fail to obtain a court order within the ten days, the City may release the documents.