

Overview of Funding Opportunity

[FAA Aviation Maintenance Technical Workers Workforce Development Grant Program](#): The purpose of the program is to expand the Aviation Maintenance Technical Workers workforce throughout the United States and U.S. Territories and support activities to facilitate the transition to careers in aviation maintenance. The program aims to **provide meaningful educational experiences to stimulate interest and encourage students throughout the Nation to prepare to enter this career field.** The Program also supports activities to facilitate the transition of individuals to careers in aviation maintenance, including members of the Armed Forces.

Eligible Applicants

The FAA considers organizations within the categories listed below as eligible applicants. Applications from individual entities within any of these three categories is consistent with congressional intent:

- A certified repair station that provides training defined in part 21, 121, 135, 145, or 147 of title 14, Code of Federal Regulations;
- Labor organization representing aviation maintenance workers;
- Accredited institution of higher education (20 U.S.C. § 1001), a postsecondary vocational institution, or a high school or secondary school (20 U.S.C. § 7801);
- Aviation-related nonprofit organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 that is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code; or
- A State, local, territorial, or Tribal governmental entity.
- Individuals are not eligible to apply under this NOFO.

How Much Funding is Available?

The FAA is currently seeking applications for the third round, which Congress appropriated at \$9M. The FAA may award up to \$1,000,000 (the ceiling established by legislation) for any one grant in any one fiscal year.

Why SimSpray?

Grant funding will be allocated to eligible projects that encompass the establishment of innovative education programs focused on imparting technical skills relevant to aviation maintenance. Furthermore, projects seeking grant support should prioritize initiatives aimed at promoting outreach efforts concerning careers in the aviation maintenance industry. These outreach endeavors should specifically target primary, secondary, and post-secondary school students, as well as communities that are traditionally underrepresented within the industry. SimSpray, as a highly efficient and effective workforce training solution, can play a pivotal role in equipping individuals with the necessary skills and expertise required to excel in these endeavors, specifically painting/coating/abrasive blasting as part of aviation manufacturing and/or maintenance. By incorporating SimSpray into the training curriculum, applicants aim to not only foster a skilled workforce but also generate significant economic impacts, contributing to the overall strength and economic prosperity of their region.

What Is SimSpray?

SimSpray is the leading VR training tool for the painting and coatings industry. With hands-on, realistic training environments, customizable training content, and real-time feedback, SimSpray provides faster, safer, and more cost-effective training experiences. SimSpray is a standalone training tool that supports a robust set of coating and blasting processes. SimSpray also offers an exclusive aerospace industry content package designed specifically for aviation manufacturing and maintenance training programs.

How Does it Work?

A variety of industry-standard parts, realistic paint details, and engaging environments keep students immersed in the learning experience. Immediate repeatability and better accessibility combined with real-time feedback help students progress quicker in each training session.

Efficient and Effective Training

Virtual reality paint training lets students practice without paint parts, materials, or exposure to the hazardous fumes and chemicals involved with in-person training. SimSpray's high-quality training features support faster, safer, better training. These virtual reality training tools allow programs to teach coating skills up to 5x faster and reduce material costs by up to 50%. By providing cost-effective training solutions, SimSpray enables employers to invest in continuous workforce development without incurring recurring subscription fees. This facilitates the retention of skilled workers and addresses the need for ongoing training as technology and industry practices evolve.

Workforce Development Impact

SimSpray® has the potential to create strong economic impacts by enhancing high-quality workforce training programs with practical benefits and realized savings, while also supporting targeted hiring preferences and supporting various initiatives in the aviation maintenance industry. SimSpray achieves these goals through several key strategies:

- **High-Quality Workforce Training Programs:** SimSpray provides a realistic and hands-on learning experience for industrial painting and sandblasting. It allows trainees to practice their skills in a simulated environment without the need for physical equipment or materials. This leads to more efficient and effective training, producing skilled workers who are ready to perform their tasks accurately and safely.
- **Recruitment, Training, and Retention of Skilled Workers:** SimSpray offers an engaging and interactive way to attract individuals to the aviation maintenance industry, educating students about careers in aviation maintenance. By showcasing the industry's unique aspects and providing a glimpse into the work environment, SimSpray can spark interest among potential candidates. Once recruited, trainees can receive comprehensive training programs through SimSpray, enabling them to develop the necessary skills for aviation painting and sandblasting.
- **Outreach to Secondary, and Post-Secondary School Students:** SimSpray can be utilized as a tool to introduce and educate students about careers in the aviation maintenance industry. Through partnerships with schools and educational institutions, VR experiences can be shared with students, providing them with a virtual tour of aviation maintenance facilities and demonstrating the exciting aspects of industrial painting and sandblasting. This outreach can inspire students to consider pursuing careers in this field.
- **Bias-Free Evaluation:** SimSpray can be used as a means to promote diversity and inclusion within the aviation maintenance industry. SimSpray offers objective and bias-free evaluation of trainees' performance. By standardizing the training and assessment process, VR platforms like SimSpray eliminate potential biases inherent in traditional training settings. This ensures fair evaluations, providing candidates from underrepresented populations an equal footing to showcase their skills and abilities, thus increasing their chances of successful entry and retention in aviation maintenance jobs. These initiatives can help diversify the industry's workforce and create equal opportunities for all individuals.
- **Support for Educational Opportunities in Economically Disadvantaged Areas:** SimSpray can help overcome geographic barriers and provide educational opportunities related to aviation

maintenance in economically disadvantaged areas. By leveraging virtual technology, training programs can reduce the need for physical infrastructure and expensive equipment. This enables individuals in economically disadvantaged areas to gain access to quality training and enhance their prospects for employment in the aviation maintenance industry.

- **Transition Support for Members of the Armed Forces:** SimSpray can assist in the transition of military personnel into careers in aviation maintenance. By offering VR-based training programs specifically designed to bridge the gap between military experience and civilian job requirements for aviation maintenance, veterans can acquire the necessary skills for employment. This targeted training approach facilitates a smoother transition and enhances employment opportunities for veterans within the aviation maintenance industry.