



Defense and Manufacturing Training Fund Program Manual

May 2026

How to Use This Manual

This manual guides employers participating in the Defense and Manufacturing Training Fund (“Training Fund”). It outlines program requirements, eligibility, reimbursement, and the steps to request training funds. Use it to understand the program before applying and as a reference throughout participation.

To apply for the Training Fund, employers can visit worksourcemaine.com/training-fund. If you have any questions, please contact Program Staff at trainingfund.dol@maine.gov or 207-530-1959.

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Program Overview

The Maine Department of Labor and Maine State Workforce Board (SWDB) secured \$7.9M from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Industry-Driven Skills Training Fund to support workforce training in Maine’s defense shipbuilding and advanced manufacturing sectors. With this funding and in partnership with industry, education and state agencies, Maine State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) established the Defense and Manufacturing Training Fund (“Training Fund”), which reimburses employers up to \$8,000 per employee for training investments.

Program Goals

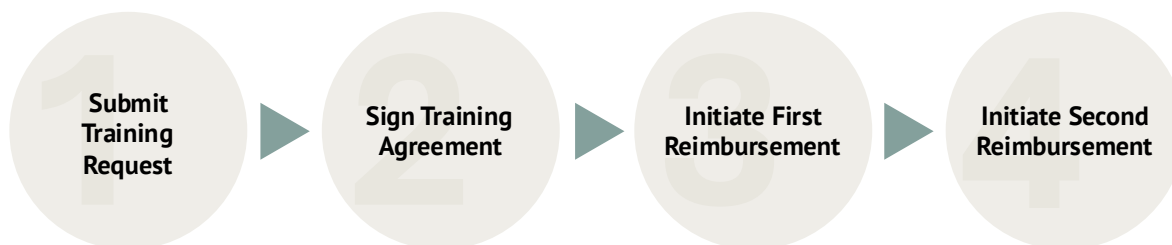
The SWDB aims to:

- Expand the skilled trades workforce for critical roles, including AI and digital skills;
- Strengthen connections between industry and training providers using data-driven strategies;
- Grow registered apprenticeship through employer investment; and
- Streamline employer access to workforce resources through Work Source Maine.

The Training Fund aims to serve at least 30 employers and upskill 900 workers statewide through training reimbursements.

How to Participate

The program follows a four-step process, with reimbursements issued in two equal payments:



1. **Submit Training Request** – Before training begins, employer submits a [training request](#) describing the company, employees, and proposed training. Program staff can help identify training if needed.
2. **Sign Training Agreement** – If approved, the employer signs a training agreement (contract with the State) outlining program requirements and reimbursement terms.
3. **Initiate First Reimbursement Request** – The employer identifies whether the employee’s training was completed to prompt their first reimbursement payment.
4. **Initiate Second Reimbursement Request** – Six months after training completion, the employer identifies whether the employee was retained to prompt their second and final reimbursement payment.

Applications are reviewed first-come, first-served. Employers will receive email updates throughout, including confirmations, approval status, and next steps. Employers can expect to hear back within two weeks of a request.

Please refer to the Appendix's [Application Form Fields](#) section for a detailed walk through of information to be collected at each stage to help employers prepare for submission.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible Employers

Employers must do the following to qualify for participation in the fund:

- Have a Maine location (verified via EAN and UI records).
- Operate in defense shipbuilding (including supply chain) or other advanced manufacturing sector and provide industry details and, if applicable, CAGE code and prime or sub-contractor status.
- Be compliant with state and federal labor laws and current on UI and Paid Family Medical Leave contributions.
- Be a [registered State of Maine vendor](#) (see [Application Form Fields](#) section in Appendix for detail).
- Commit to recruiting and training new hires and/or upskilling existing employees.
- Commit to partner with MDOL and workforce partners by maintaining a [Maine JobLink \(MJL\) account](#), posting jobs to MJL, and joining a workforce partner onboarding call.
- Define employee training needs (role, skills, credential, timeline, cost, provider, expected wage gains).
- Report training, employment and wage outcomes of each trainee to MDOL within 45 days of request.
- Pay competitive wages to employees as defined by [local labor market information](#).
- Explore and leverage additional [workforce funding sources](#), where available.
- Retain reimbursement records for six years and comply with audits.

Additional Requirements for Larger Awardees

For employers receiving \$50,000 or more in reimbursement funds, commit to:

- Having training supervisors participate in at least one of the following (or similar) workplace trainings:
 - Workplace safety training through [SafetyWorks!](#)
 - MDOL-offered training to support recruitment & retention of unemployed and underemployed workers (e.g., [Employment First-related training](#), [Building Welcoming Workplaces](#))
 - Apprenticeship Lunch and Learn [informational session](#)
- Providing at least one business or participant success story after training completion.

Eligible Workers

Employees must be all of the following to participate:

- New hires or incumbent workers (i.e., funds cannot be used for pre-hire training);
- At least 17 years of age and not currently enrolled in secondary school (e.g., high school);
- W-2 employees; and
- Perform work in Maine for an eligible participating employer.

Please note: although workers are not required to live in Maine, this program is intended to serve Maine businesses and workers, so the vast majority of an employer's request must be for workers residing in the state.

Eligible Training

As an industry-driven program, employers can pursue multiple options for training their employees, including through the following training types:

1. **Registered apprenticeship:** either developing a new program or expanding an existing one
2. **Other skills training:** including classroom training, in-house training, and online trainings, among others.

Training Requirements

To qualify for reimbursement, all trainings must:

- Align with **industry-defined priority manufacturing occupations and digital skills** ([see list in Appendix](#));
- Result in an **industry-recognized credential** ([see definition below](#)) that is portable and valued by multiple employers in the manufacturing industry;
- Be completed in **fewer than two years**. This may include graduate certificates or accelerated bachelor's programs if a participant has already completed an associate's degree or if the program can be completed in under two years;
- **Start after program approval**, as defined by the training agreement signing date; and
- **Supplement, not supplant, existing employer training supports;** funds must add new or expanded training for employees and cannot replace or be used to cover costs of existing employer-provided trainings.

Priority Occupations and Digital Skills

Identified through the [Advanced Manufacturing Talent Roadmap](#), employer surveys, and industry input, these occupations and digital skills are eligible for reimbursement. Employers should select the occupation closest matching [ONET](#) occupation; if the exact title your company uses is not listed, refer to [ONET](#) for guidance. Additional critical occupations or digital skills may be submitted using the "Other" fields for review.

Priority Occupations

- **Engineers and Engineering Technicians:** Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technologists and Technicians; Aerospace Engineers; Architectural and Engineering Managers; Calibration Technologists and Technicians; Chemical Engineers; Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Technologists and Technicians; Electrical Engineers; Electro-Mechanical and Mechatronics Technologists and Technicians; Electronics Engineers (Except Computer); Engineering Technologists and Technicians (All Other); Engineers (All Other); Industrial Engineers; Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians; Manufacturing Engineers; Manufacturing Technicians; Materials Engineers; Mechanical Engineers

- **Drafters:** Drafters (All Other); Electrical and Electronics Drafters; Mechanical Drafters
- **Machine Operations and Maintenance:** Helpers—Production Workers; Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters/Operators/Tenders; Electrical and Electronic Assemblers; Electrical and Electronics Repairers (Commercial and Industrial Equipment); Electromechanical Assemblers; Industrial Machinery Mechanics; Layout Workers (Metal and Plastic); Maintenance and Repair Workers (General); Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators; Molding/Coremaking/Casting Machine Setters/Operators/Tenders (Metal and Plastic); Multiple Machine Tool Setters/Operators/Tenders (Metal and Plastic); Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders; Paper Goods Machine Setters/Operators/Tenders; Production Helpers; Production Workers (All Other)
- **Machining:** Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Tool Operators; CNC Tool Programmers; Machinists; Millwrights
- **Production Managers:** First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics/Installers/Repairers; First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers; General and Operations Managers; Industrial Production Managers; Architectural and Engineering Managers
- **Quality Control and Assurance:** Health and Safety Engineers (Except Mining Safety Engineers and Inspectors); Occupational Health and Safety Specialists; Quality Assurance Technologists; Quality Control Inspectors; Quality Control Supervisors
- **Welding:** Sheet Metal Workers; Structural Iron and Steel Workers; Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters; Welders/Cutters/Solderers/Brazers; Welding Engineers; Welding Inspectors; Welding Instructors; Welding Supervisors; Welding, Soldering, and Brazing Machine Setters/Operators/Tenders

Priority Digital Skills

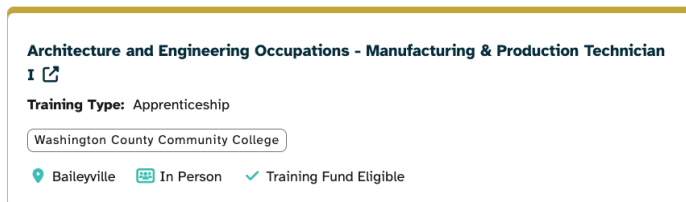
- Additive manufacturing
- Augmented reality
- Automation & robotics
- Capturing, integrating and sharing data
- Cloud computing
- Cyber-physical systems
- Cybersecurity
- Data analytics and visualization
- Enterprise systems knowledge (ERP, MES)
- Machine learning/AI
- Networking, integration and edge computing, unified namespace/data lakes
- Sensors/IoT
- Ability to bridge OT and IT networks

Industry-Recognized Credentials

This program defines industry recognized credentials as qualifications – such as certificates, registered apprenticeship completion certificates, certifications, degrees, or licenses – that are validated by a specific industry and sought by employers for recruitment and hiring. They verify that an individual has

mastered a specific set of skills and knowledge for a particular occupation or field, often require passing an exam and can be a supplemental to a traditional degree. Industry recognized credentials include:

- Credentials offered by Maine training providers (e.g., Maine Community College and University of Maine Systems, Adult Education, Maine MEP, Maine Maritime Academy, Roux Institute) listed on Work Source Maine and tagged as pre-approved for reimbursement
- National or vendor certifications (e.g., American Welding Society Certified Welder, FANUC Robotics Operator), searchable from a list of 900+ approved credentials in the application



Example eligible credential listed on Work Source Maine

Note: If a training is not listed on Work Source Maine or the national credential list, employers are encouraged to submit it for consideration by entering the details when prompted. If it leads to a national or manufacturer certification not found in the search tool, select “Other” and enter the certification name.

Training Costs

Funding offsets high-quality training costs and supports workforce development. Reimbursement is capped at \$8,000 per participant across all training types. Costs must be reasonable and tied to credential attainment. When available, the Training Fund team will suggest free or lower-cost in-state options may be required when available.

Reimbursable costs include:

- Tuition, instruction, or provider fees
- Certification/exam and prep costs
- Training materials, supplies, and equipment
- Curriculum development and delivery

For registered apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training (OJT) support for **new apprentices only** (not incumbent apprentices) may be available after other training costs are covered. OJT support is time-limited (up to 12 weeks) and covers up to 50% of wages during the training period to offset supervision and mentoring costs.

Unallowed costs include those that supplant existing employer training supports or ongoing employer-provided trainings. Funds must add new or expanded training for employees.

Please note: See the Complementary Programs section of the Appendix to learn more about other resources employers can pair with the Training Fund to further offset training costs and support the recruitment and retention of their workforce.

Documentation Requirements

Registered Apprenticeship

Employers requesting support for registered apprenticeships must follow these guidelines to qualify for the higher rate:

- Submit a Maine Apprenticeship Program (MAP)-approved schedule of work. If you are interested in creating a new registered apprenticeship program and need assistance, please contact the [Maine Apprenticeship Program](#).
- Define the training period in the MAP-approved schedule of work, including start and end dates, skills and competencies to be developed, how they will be measured or demonstrated, and any related classroom or technical instruction. For new apprentices, this period is typically around six months.
 - Training cannot begin until the request is approved.
 - Training completion is defined as when the apprentice has demonstrated and documented the required skills and competencies and/or when related instruction results in an industry-recognized credential, ensuring measurable skill gains and potential credential attainment.
- Submit a line-item budget with the initial request and an invoice with the first reimbursement, using this [template](#).

Other Skills Training

Employers may request reimbursement for classroom or in-house training (internal or external trainers) under Other Skills Training. Costs must be specific to the individual employee, and all program requirements apply (e.g., training must lead to an industry-recognized credential). Employers must submit a line-item budget with the initial request and an invoice with the first reimbursement, using this [template](#).

Reimbursement Structure

Employer Caps

- Employers are eligible for up to \$250,000 per calendar year in reimbursement, not to exceed \$1M over the life of the program (May 2026 – July 2029).
- 50% of funds reserved for defense shipbuilding employers; 50% for other advanced manufacturing employers.
 - The defense shipbuilding sector refers to the network of shipyards, suppliers, and contractors responsible for designing, constructing, fabricating, and/or repairing vessels and maritime systems for national defense and security.
 - The advanced manufacturing sector refers to the use of innovative technologies to create existing products and the creation of new products. Advanced manufacturing can include production activities that depend on information, automation, computation, software, sensing, and networking.

Employee and Training Caps

- Reimbursement rates are based on the training request, with a maximum reimbursement rate of 80%.
- The maximum reimbursement available per employee is \$8,000. Employees may participate in multiple trainings (not concurrently) though total may never exceed \$8,000 over grant period.
- Employers may request reimbursement for training of any cost, but a maximum of \$10,000 will be considered, which is then subject to the corresponding reimbursement rate tiers (see below).

Reimbursement Rate Tiers

Employers are eligible for a base reimbursement of 40% of approved training costs for additional qualifying factors described in table below. The maximum total reimbursement rate shall not exceed 80%.

Reimbursement Tiers	
Baseline reimbursement rate	40%
Registered apprenticeship	+10%
5-10% wage increase 6 months post-training completion	+10%
10+% wage increase 6 months post-training completion	+10%
Small business (fewer than 100 FTEs)	+10%
Maximum reimbursement rate	80%

Please note: if an employer does not fulfill the commitments used to calculate the reimbursement rate (such as wage increases or apprenticeship participation), the reimbursement amount will be recalculated and adjusted accordingly.

Reimbursement Milestones

Reimbursements will be issued in equal parts, based on the corresponding reimbursement rate, with half of the reimbursable amount provided at each milestone.

Following the initial training request and signing of the training agreement, reimbursements are issued in two stages to encourage training completion and worker retention.

1. First reimbursement: issued after the training has been completed, documentation has been submitted, and the reimbursement has been approved.
2. Second reimbursement: issued after the employee has remained employed six months after training completion and the reimbursement has been approved.

All reimbursement requests must be submitted by May 1, 2029 to be considered for approval.

Please note: if an employee does not complete training or is not retained, the corresponding reimbursement will not be issued.

Reimbursement Examples

The following examples demonstrate how reimbursement amounts may vary depending on employer commitments such as wage increases or apprenticeship participation. Training costs used here are purely hypothetical and for the purpose of explanation, and key qualifying criteria are noted in *italics*.

Example	Reimbursement Amount
A defense shipbuilding supplier with <i>30 employees</i> trains one machinist through a \$6,000 training program and commits to providing a <i>12% wage increase</i> within six months of program completion.	The employer qualifies for a 70% reimbursement rate (40% base + 20% for wage gains + 10% small business), totaling \$4,200 on \$6,000 in training—paid as \$2,100 at completion and \$2,100 after 6-month retention, if requirements are met.
A forest bioproducts manufacturer with <i>140 employees</i> enrolls a worker in a <i>registered apprenticeship</i> that will result in a <i>7% wage increase within six months of training completion</i> , with training costs of \$12,000.	The employer qualifies for a 60% rate (40% base + 10% for wage gain + 10% for apprenticeship). With a \$10,000 capped cost (from \$12,000), total reimbursement is \$6,000—paid as \$3,000 at each milestone, if requirements are met.

Appendix

A. Frequently Asked Questions

Do workers need to live in Maine?

Workers do not need to live in Maine, but they must be employed by an eligible participating Maine employer. However, this program is intended to serve Maine businesses and workers, so a vast majority of an employer's request must be for workers residing in the state.

What happens if an employee does not complete training?

If an employee does not complete the training, the costs associated with that employee's training will not be eligible for reimbursement.

What happens if the employee departs from the company within six months of completing the training?

The second reimbursement payment will not be issued if the employee is not retained.

Can employees participate in multiple trainings?

Yes. Employees may complete multiple trainings, up to \$8,000 per employee over the life of the grant (or until grant funds are expended). Trainings may not overlap—each must be completed before the next begins.

How does the Training Fund define staff size?

Staff size is defined by the total number of FTEs across the company, including Maine and non-Maine based facilities.

What if the company needs to train an employee for an occupation or digital skill not on the priority list?

Employers are encouraged to submit that associated training for consideration using the “Other” options in the form for consideration and review by the Training Fund team. The priority occupations and digital skills list will continue to be refined based on employers’ requests.

Are federal workers eligible for training reimbursement?

No, funds may not be used to reimburse employers for training federal workers in any occupations or at any worksites. However, reimbursing employers for training federal contractors is allowable.

Will the cost of training be paid upfront, or will employers be reimbursed?

Employers will pay training costs upfront and then be reimbursed after the training is completed, if all eligibility, contractual obligations, and documentation requirements are met per the training agreement.

Will eligible employers receive the training payment, or will it go to the training provider?

Training costs will be paid directly to the employer.

How soon will employers receive reimbursement once their first and second reimbursements requests are approved?

Once employers provide all necessary information and their requests are approved, payments should be processed within 30 days.

B. Application Form Fields

Employers will complete a form to collect the information needed to determine eligibility and process reimbursements. To help prepare, the information required is outlined below by program step. Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Welcome

This step confirms intent to participate and begins the application process. Returning employers adding employees can skip company details and proceed directly to employee and training information.

Training Request

Company Details

This information is used to verify eligibility, operations in Maine, and sector alignment. To save employers time, note that this page will only need to be completed once, and employers will receive an error if entering the information of a previously entered employer. If returning to the program later to enroll additional employees, employers should select the option on the welcome screen indicating they have inquired previously. Fields include:

Welcome
Defense Shipbuilding and Advanced Manufacturing Training Fund

All fields marked with * are required and must be filled.

Is your company new to the training fund? *

Yes, I would like to participate in the training fund

No, I have previously inquired about training or enrolled employees for reimbursement

Save Next

ACCESSIBILITY
SHARED EASY

- Company Name*
- State Employer Account Number (EAN)*: Also called a State Employer Identification Number (SEIN). If unknown, contact your payroll department or the MDOL Unemployment Insurance Tax Division at (207) 621-5100.
- Brief description of Product and Services*
- Website
- Sector*
 - If defense shipbuilding: whether a company is a prime or sub-contractor and CAGE code*
- Staff Size*
- Maine Headquarters Address*
- Employer Maine JobLink (MJL) Email*: Employers must have an MJL account to participate in the training fund. If you are unsure of the email address associated with your account, please call MDOL's Maine JobLink team at (207) 623-7967. If your company does not already have an MJL account, please follow this [link](#) to create one.
- Employers may submit for provisional approval without being registered as a vendor but must register to fully participate. If you're unsure whether you already have a Vendor ID, you can check using the state registration portal (Public Access → Vendor Registration → Company Search). Providing your Vendor ID now will help speed up application review.
- Point of Contact Information*
- If you don't know the specific training you would like to use to upskill your employee, there's an opportunity here to identify the occupation or skill you need training for and Training Fund program staff will advise on potential solutions.

Employee and Training Details

Captures employee-specific data and must be submitted for each employee and training. This information is required for federal reporting, eligibility validation, and wage outcome tracking. To save employers time, the form allows employers to add another employee to the same training or add the same employee to another training without having to re-enter this information. Fields include:

- Employee Name*
- Social Security Number*: For federal reporting requirements, employers must provide Social Security Numbers for participating employees. This information is used only for federal workforce reporting and performance tracking.
- Employee Maine JobLink (MJL) Email: Employers may submit a form for provisional approval without providing Maine JobLink account information for their staff but will ultimately be required to in order to participate in the program. If not already registered in MJL, your employees may do so at this [link](#). Providing MJL information at this stage will help expedite your application review.
- When the employee started or will begin employment*

- Whether the employee is at least 17 years old and not currently enrolled in high school*
- Whether the employee lives in the state of Maine*
- If requesting a higher reimbursement rate, current wage and planned wage within 6 months of training completion.
- The occupation you are seeking training for*
- Training Provider*
- Training Name*
- Training Link
- Training Type*
 - If the training is within a registered apprenticeship, a schedule of work identifying which competencies or related technical instruction will be completed within six months.
- Credential Type*
- Any manufacturer or industry-specific certificate or certification gained through the training*
- Estimated Training Start Date*
- Estimated Training End Date*
- Training Cost*
- A training budget using this [template](#)*

Employee Details

Please complete the details below for each employee you would like to train. At the end of the form you will have an opportunity to add additional employees and trainings using the same information.

All fields marked with * are required and must be filled.

Employee Name *

First Name Last Name

Social Security Number *

We collect Social Security Numbers to comply with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other state and federal reporting requirements. This is a secure website in compliance with SOCC and HIPAA requirements.

Employee Maine JobLink (MJL) Email

Employees may submit a form for provisional approval without providing Maine JobLink account information for their staff but will ultimately be required to in order to participate in the program. If your employees are already registered, please enter their MJL account email here. If not already registered, your employees may do so at the link below. Providing MJL information at this stage will help expedite your application review.

To register with MJL, please follow this link:
[Create Job Seeker Account - Maine JobLink](#)

Please identify when the employee started or will begin employment. * They started employment in the last six months
 They have been employed at the company for longer than six months

Is this employee at least 17 years old and not currently enrolled in high school? * Yes
 No

Does this employee live in the state of Maine? * Yes
 No

After approval of company and training details, the employer will receive a training agreement to sign, confirming program terms and reporting requirements outlined in this guide.

First Reimbursement

This form is submitted after each employee completes training to trigger the first reimbursement. It will be sent to the employer and pre-populated from the initial request. Fields include:

- Whether each employee completed the training*
- Confirmed start and end date*
- Confirmed training cost*
- Other training incentives used to pay for the training*
- Training completion documentation*
- Training invoice*

First Reimbursement

Below are the training details initially provided.

All fields marked with * are required and must be filled.

Employee Name *


First Name Last Name

Training Provider *

Training Name *

Credential Type *

Did the employee complete the training? * Yes
 No



Second Reimbursement Form

This form is submitted six months after training completion to confirm retention and issue the final reimbursement. It will be sent to the employer and pre-populated from the initial request. Fields include:

- Whether the employee is still employed at the company*
- If seeking a higher reimbursement rate for the employee's training by providing a wage increase, the employee's current hourly wage*
 - Documentation of their wage (e.g., pay stub) at training request
- Retention/wage documentation*

C. Complementary Programs

Employers can combine these resources with the Training Fund to offset costs and support workforce recruitment and retention. Visit Work Source Maine's [Virtual CareerCenter](#) for a full list of options.

Training Incentives

Depending on the training, employers may be eligible for additional incentives:

- An additional **\$2,000** per worker in tax credits through the [Dirigo Business Incentives Program](#), if the training costs more than \$2,000, is at least 20 total hours, and your company is claiming a minimum of 3 qualified employees in the tax year.
- Up to **\$2,500** in funding per apprentice through the [Maine Apprenticeship Program](#), with additional funding available to employers that are starting an apprenticeship program or adding a new occupation to an existing one.
- Up to **\$1,200** per frontline worker in matching training reimbursement funding through the [Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce](#).
- An additional **\$3,500** per apprentice through the [American Manufacturing Apprenticeship Incentive Fund](#).

Other Employer Supports

The following resources are also available to support employers' recruitment and retention efforts:

- **CareerCenters:** Help with job postings, recruitment, hiring events, interviewing, and candidate matching.
- **WIOA Programs:** Regional partners ([EMDC](#), [Workforce Solutions](#), [ACAP](#)) to support employers with new hires' on-the-job training, wraparound supports, and employee placement services.
- **Bureau of Rehabilitation Services:** Connects employers with qualified workers with disabilities and related support services.

Stevens Amendment: The Defense Shipbuilding and Advanced Manufacturing Training Fund ("Training Fund") is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor. A total of \$7.9M, 100 percent of the Training Fund, is financed with federal funds.