

MassHire Bristol Workforce Board
FY'20 In-School/Out-of-School Youth RFP
Bidders Conference
April 23, 2019 – 9:00 am
MassHire Fall River Career Center

In Attendance: Jay Correia (FRPS), Derek Farias (FRPS), Dan LeBrun (TASC/AHS), Gary Reese (Westport Comm. Schools), Hil Camara, Beth Viveiros, Victoria St. Pierre (PRIDE), Dale Hayden (BCC), Maria Ferreira-Bedard (SER), Christopher Nielsen (Business Innovation Center)

Staff: Thomas Perreira, Maria Frazier, Nick Church

Mr. Perreira thanked everyone for attending and noted that copies of the RFP are available at this meeting and upon request or can be downloaded on the WBs website www.bristolwib.org. The RFPs are for Fiscal Year 2020. He noted that minutes of the bidder's conference and any questions and the answers asked at this meeting will be posted on the BWB's website along with any questions asked after the bidders conference. Also, all questions must be directed to Thomas Perreira at tperreira@bristoljobs.org

There are two components to the RFP, In-School and Out-of-School.

In-School – IS

I. The purpose of this RFP is to fund effective proposals to serve WIOA eligible in-school youth. There are 14 required youth program elements that our local area must make available. Not all of the 14 elements must be present in any single program. The full list of program elements is listed on pg. 2 of the RFP. This RFP is for in-school youth who have not attained a high school diploma or equivalent and are attending school on a full-time basis.

II. Key terms are listed on page 3 of the RFP. These terms are used throughout the RFP.

III. The WIOA local partners are the BWB, City of Fall River and the Bristol Career Centers. These entities work together with service providers to build a comprehensive, integrated youth delivery system. Youth eligibility and assessment is completed by the Career Center, not by the service provider. The BWB selects the youth service providers, the City is the grant recipient and the career center provide outreach, recruitment and determine eligibility.

IV. The BWB has established general policies around which organizations should develop their programs. These policy considerations are listed on pgs. 5 & 6 of the RFP. Partnerships among employers, youth serving agencies, school districts and/or other providers is strongly

encouraged and given priority for funding. Providers must incorporate performance measures in the development of programs and youth service strategies.

Youth aged 17 and over who are high school seniors are given top priority for services. However, this does not automatically exclude the placement of 14 – 16 year olds into programs.

V. Work sites must provide quality work and learning opportunities, governed by a Work-Based Learning Plan. WIOA funded wages to youth are typically paid through the City of Fall River, and not through selected vendors. However, wages are to be included in the proposed budget to give a complete picture of overall program cost. Wages count against the program cap as defined in Section VIII.

Subsidized work experience during the summer is limited to 20 hours per week for no more than 6 to 8 weeks at minimum wage.

Stand-alone summer work experience is not a program objective of the BWB. In most cases, the attainment of a high school diploma will be a planned goal for youth.

VI. Each category in this section has a corresponding section on the Proposal Specification Form and all required information must be included.

Programs funded must operate in at least one of the BWB communities defined in Section II, Key Terms.

All youth must meet WIOA eligibility guidelines listed in Attachment A. Preference is given to enrolling youth who are 17 and over.

While Career Centers will be a source of initial enrollments, proposers must include methods that will be utilized to recruit WIOA eligible youth.

Proposed services shall include the required Youth Elements as cited in Section I of the RFP. At a minimum, the proposed program must provide the following element: paid and unpaid work experience. However, provision of additional elements will be viewed favorably in evaluation of proposals.

If a proposer decides to utilize a partner or partners, a letter of support or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the partnering organization must be included with the proposal. The support letter or MOU shall describe the specific additional resources/services that will result from the partnership.

For paid work experience with private, for-profit employers, youth wages must be paid by the employer, unless the work experience falls with a priority or critical cluster identified in the Southeast Regional Labor Market Blueprint (ATT C), and supports participants' progression toward career ladder opportunities in those industries.

Youth programs will be responsible for performance measures. Attachment B in the RFP defines the statewide performance standards by which the BWB is measured. Proposals shall include which performance measures will be acquired by youth.

VII. Who may apply to operate a program is listed on pg. 11 of the RFP. Proposals that represent joint efforts on the part of public, private, and educational organization will be given priority consideration for funding.

Facilities providing services must be accessible to persons with disabilities and operate in full compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

All subcontracting arrangements must be articulated in detail in the proposal and be included as a separate line item in the budget.

VIII. It is estimated that there will be approximately \$75,000 awarded through this RFP for services to in-school youth over the entirety of Fiscal Year 2020. This is an estimate, and final budget information may cause variation from these estimates. The BWB has elected to place a cap on the cost per proposal. Individual in-school proposals cannot exceed \$25,000. Organizations may elect to submit more than one proposal (no more than \$25,000 each). Scoring preference is given for programs that demonstrate high levels of cost effectiveness in the provision of comprehensive youth services.

Bidders are required to provide documentation of cash and/or in-kind matching resources.

IX. To be considered for funding, proposers must adhere to the submission requirements. Faxed or emailed proposals will **not** be accepted.

RFP #19-9 must be written on the envelopes you submit.

Proposers will submit 1 original and 8 copies of the Specification Form, Budget Forms and Budget Narrative. Proposal and budget must be in separate envelopes and clearly marked. If proposal and budget are in the same envelope, it will be disqualified.

Proposals must be received at the address listed on pg. 13 of the RFP.

Proposal submission deadline is listed on pg. 13 of the RFP.

Make sure to follow all the instructions. Failure to do so could lead to disqualification of your proposal.

A tentative schedule of youth services procurement activities (actual schedule may vary) is listed on pg. 14 of the RFP.

Minutes of the bidder's conference will be posted on the BWB's website www.bristolwib.org.

X. Selected proposers will enter into a cost reimbursement contract. Program period will cover 7/1/2019 through 6/30/2020. No expenditures may extend beyond 6/30/2020. Based on funding availability, the BWB is reserving the option of funding proposals for up to two (2) years, but proposals must be written for 1 year of service only.

XI. All questions regarding the RFP must be addressed to Thomas Perreira. Contact information is listed on pg. 16 of the RFP.

It was noted that the evaluation form on page 20 is only for reference purposes and is not filled out by the proposer. It is for reference only and is used by the proposal review committee.

In filling out the budget, please note there are multiple tabs in the excel budget. Include all pages of the budget, not just the cover/summary page, with your proposal.

Proposers must be specific when writing the budget narrative as to how funds will be spent. Mr. Perreira noted that there is no page limit for responses or attachments.

I/S Q&A

Q. Can you use independent contractor?

A. Yes, you can subcontract with other individuals and organizations to provide services, but this must be clearly identified in the proposal.

- Q. If you are doing subsidized wages in the summer time under WIOA you are limited to 20 hours?
- A. Yes, if you have a youth enrolled in WIOA subsidized work experience you have to abide by the limitations, as defined in the RFP.
- Q. Do you have a group of kids that are already in the system and are ready to start?
- A. There is the possibility that some enrolled youth may carry over into the fiscal year. However, the program will be expected to engage in recruitment activities as referenced in the RFP to meet proposed enrollment goals.
- Q. Aren't there two required elements?
- A. In-School only has only one required element, Out-of-School has two required elements.
- Q. Can you pay someone to come to hold the workshops as part of your funding?
- A. The RFP does not preclude you from including the cost for a trainer.
- Q. Can you submit your tax returns in lieu of a financial statement?
- A. Just state that you are a new business and submit the most recent financial records that are applicable to your organization.
- Q. Would you be more willing to award a second year of services if a proposer has juniors in the program who are about to become seniors?
- A. That is not a factor in our decision making process for approving a second year of services. The RFP clearing states a preference for serving seniors.
- Q. What does impact being selected for a second year?
- A. A knowledge of funding for the next year, no policy changes by the WB and contract is meeting all program performance requirements.
- Q. How many people at bidders conference are submitting a proposal again that supplied services last year?
- A. We do not know who will apply again. Right now we have 5 youth sub-recipients; 2 out of school and 3 in school.
- Q. Youth services don't have to start in July?
- A. The start date is based on the program design. A later date will be taken into consideration in the rating. The RFP does not require that all youth be recruited and required to start July 1.
- Q. In attaining a credential, if a student has an IEP does a certification of attendance qualify as a performance outcome?
- A. Massachusetts endorsed credential is not equivalent to a high school diploma. It is, however, intended to make available further educational, job training and employment options for students. If a proposer wishes to include this as a performance outcome, please note this in your proposal. Final performance rate will be completed at contract negotiaon for successful proposers.

Q. Will a proposal be given a stronger rating based whether it proposes training in a critical or priority industry cluster?

A. For the purpose of this RFP, priority and critical industry clusters are not weighted differently.

Q. Are these industry clusters defined in the website, how the state views it and what it looks like?

A. The NAICS codes define what occupations fall within each respected industry clusters. In the regional labor market blueprint we define some priority occupations as well within the industries. We regionally define it, but we will accept anything that falls under the NAICS code.

Q. Does any of the criteria receive a higher rating?

A. No. The rating criteria is not based on a point system. As a result, none of the rating categories are weighed more heavily than others.

Q. Do we have to include percentages in the budget?

A. You don't have to. It's not a requirement, but if you do you must have a methodology.

Q. If BWB already has a copy of a proposers financial statement, it does not have to be included in the RFP package?

A. Yes, but check with the BWB to make sure we have the latest one.

Q. What is fringe?

A. It would include anything that you are legally required to pay by law for an employee like FICA, Medicare and health insurance or any other benefits that your organization provides.

Q. How do we define the original RFP from the copies?

A. Write or stamp original on the proposal.

Q. If the organization adds services to the program, do we have to renegotiate the contract?

A. Only if it impacts the cost of the contractor and you are seeking line items adjustments to your budget.

Q. Will the minimum wage be going up?

A. Yes. It will be going from \$12/hour now to \$12.75/hour starting January 1, 2020.

Q. Because the hourly wage will change in January 2020, do we have to explain the new wages for half the year?

A. Yes, include it in the budget narrative to explain the difference in the numbers.

Q. Can you propose to re-engage out of school youth to get back in school?

A. The I/S RFP does not preclude you from saying that as part of your program, you will have a re-engagement process. However, the RFP requires you to work with IS youth.

- Q. Instead of or in addition to wages, can you pay a stipend.?
- A. The RFP does not require you to pay a wage or a stipend for specific categories, however, payment of a stipend must be tied to some programmatic achievement. The stipend under the law has to be tied to the achievement of something.
- Q. Can you issue a small stipend when an individual completes their OSHA certification?
- A. The RFP doesn't preclude from offering a stipend for an achievement of a goal within the program.
- Q. Can you include both an hourly wage and a stipend in the RFP?
- A. Yes. The stipends would be included in the "other" category and then describe the stipend in the narrative.
- Q. If you have an OSHA certification and it takes one student 100 hours to get it and another student 20 hours to get it, does it meet the criteria as it relates to the stipend for the particular achievement?
- A. Yes, if the stipend is associated with a specific achievement, particularly industry recognized credentials. In this case, it is the attainment of the certification that achieves the stipend not the number of hours taken to attain that certification.

Out-of School (OOS)

- I.** The purpose of this RFP is to fund effective proposals to serve WIOA eligible out-of-school youth. These are youth ages 16-24 who are not attending school at the present time. There are 14 required youth program elements that our local area must make available. Not all of the 14 elements must be present in any single program. The full list of program elements is listed on pg. 2 of the RFP.
- II.** Key terms are listed on page 3 of the RFP. These terms are used throughout the RFP.
- III.** The WIOA local partners are the BWB, City of Fall River and the Bristol Career Centers. These entities work together with service providers to build a comprehensive, integrated youth delivery system. Youth eligibility and assessment is completed by the Career Center, not by the service provider. The BWB selects the youth service providers, the City is the grant recipient and the career center provide outreach, recruitment and determine eligibility.
- IV.** Primary program services must be provided in one or more of the communities within the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). A complete list of cities and town within the LWDA is included in Section II., Key Terms. Proposers may serve youth in one, two or all three communities. If a proposer wants to provide services for more than one community, they may submit separate proposals for each community or one proposal for multiple communities. Services provided to youth from a community must take place within that community.

The BWB does not define a minimum or maximum number of youth to be served in this RFP. Proposer must enter the exact number of youth to serve. Cost effectiveness will be an important consideration in the award decision.

Proposers must include any methods that will be utilized to recruit WIOA eligible youth.

All programs must directly provide academic services to assist in skill gains for basic skills deficient youth who have a high school diploma, or HiSET or GED preparation for those without a high school diploma.

WIOA requires a Local Workforce Development Area to devote at least 20 percent of its Title I Youth funds for paid and unpaid work experience. While proposers are not required to devote a specific amount of funds to paid and unpaid work experience, it is a mandatory element that must be included in proposals.

Collaboration among service providers and employers is strongly recommended. Proposers must demonstrate commitment by developing a partnership with at least one organization. A letter of support or memorandum of understanding (MOU) from the partnering organization(s) must be included with the proposal.

Two WIOA youth elements are mandatory: 1) tutoring, study skills training, and instruction; and 2) paid and unpaid work experience. The remaining eleven elements are optional. The provision of additional elements will be viewed favorably when evaluating the proposals. One youth element, follow-up services, is not being procured through this solicitation.

For paid work experience with private, for-profit employers, youth wages must be paid by the employer, unless the work experience falls with a priority or critical cluster identified in the Southeast Regional Labor Market Blueprint (ATT C), and supports participants' progression toward career ladder opportunities in those industries.

Occupational skills training shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupation in the local area involved. Please see Attachment D for a list of these industry clusters. Proposers wishing to provide training in a category other than those listed in Attachment D, please include labor market and other data that supports your selection.

Proposers must cite any relevant experience operating programs on behalf of the BWB, operating similar programs serving youth, and/or any other relevant qualifications. If program staff has been identified, resumes must be attached to the Specification Form. If staff has not been identified, job descriptions for the proposed program staff must be attached.

Proposals must clearly define the goals and objectives of the program and how this will be measured. Attachment B defines the current performance standards.

V. To be considered for funding, proposed services must meet minimum program threshold requirements listed on pg. 9 of the RFP.

VI. Who may apply to operate a program is listed on pg. 9 of the RFP. Proposals that represent joint efforts on the part of public, private, and educational organization will be given priority consideration for funding. Facilities providing services must be in full compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). All subcontracting arrangements must be articulated in detail in the proposal and be included in the budget. The BWB reserves the right to split awards, if they deem necessary.

VII. It is estimated that there will be approximately \$250,000 - \$270,000 awarded for services to out-of-school youth throughout the region over the entirety of Fiscal Year 2020. This is an estimate only, and final budget information may cause variation from these estimates. Cost per proposal cannot exceed \$90,000 per community. The maximum for one community is \$90,000; two communities \$180,000 and three communities \$270,000. An organization may also choose to submit multiple proposals for one or more communities. Bidders are also required to provide documentation of cash and/or in-kind matching resources to leverage the WIOA funds. All WIOA reimbursed costs at the contract level will be defined as program dollars.

VIII. Proposers are advised to read the submission requirements carefully to avoid any possible errors. To be considered for funding, proposers must adhere to the submission requirements.

Faxed or emailed proposals will **not** be accepted.

RFP #19-9 must be written on the envelopes you submit.

Proposal and budget must be in separate envelopes and clearly marked. Proposals must be received at the address listed on pg. 11 of the RFP.

Proposal submission deadline is listed on pg. 11 of the RFP.

Make sure to follow all the instructions. Failure to do so could lead to disqualification of your proposal.

A tentative schedule of youth services procurement activities (actual schedule may vary) is listed on pg.12 of the RFP.

Minutes of the bidders conference will be posted on the BWB's website www.bristolwib.org.

IX. Selected proposers will enter into a cost reimbursement contract. Program period will cover 7/1/2019 through 6/30/2020. No expenditures may extend beyond 6/30/2020. While continued WIOA changes may preclude the consideration of contracting beyond one year, the BWB is reserving the option of funding proposals for up to two (2) years of activities based on availability of funding. However, proposals must be written for a 1 year service delivery period or 12 months.

X. Appeal and bid protest procedures are noted on pg. 13 Section X. of the RFP.

XI. All questions regarding the RFP must be addressed to Thomas Perreira. Contact information is listed on pg. 14 of the RFP.

It was noted that the evaluation form on page 19 is only for reference purposes and does not need to be filled out by the proposer. It is used by the proposal review committee. However, it does provide the criteria on which proposals will be rated.

In filling out the budget, please note there are multiple tabs in the excel budget. Include all pages of the budget, not just the cover/summary page, with your proposal.

Proposers must be specific when writing the budget narrative in describing their proposed costs and should make it as clear as possible. Mr. Perreira noted that there is no page limit for responses or attachments.

OOS Q&A

- Q. If there is another town outside of these and they don't have a bus service and the community is underserved and there is no transportation, how would you navigate that in the proposal?
- A. You can propose to serve youth in any one of the 14 communities but have to make the case and write your justification. However, please review the rating criteria regarding location of service which clearly identifies the boards location preferences.
- Q. Is there a teacher/student ratio preference?
- A. No, there is no specific criteria in the RFP. However, program design is taken into consideration when the proposal is being reviewed.
- Q. Is there a number that the WB is typically able to serve with the funding each year?
- A. The number of youth served vary from year to year. This can vary greatly based upon the intensity of service provided within the programs.
- Q. Are there any major changes?
- A. There is a policy change on the subsidized versus unsubsidized work experience because traditionally we have not allowed wages for for-profit private sector entities. The labor marker preferences have been changed and food is no longer an allowable expense.
- Q. If you offer an incentive to the participants like a discount is that considered as an in-kind contribution?
- A. Propose whatever you define as in-kind and the WB will make the determination if it is in-kind or not.
- Q. Is an incentive allowed as a gift card to a supermarket at the end of the program?
- A. It may be possible, but it must be the same criteria as a cash stipend. It has to be tied to a specific achievement within the program.