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**WIOA In School PY 2018 – 2019
Bidder's Conference
Tuesday, April 3, 2018 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
Recorder: Tracy Giorgio**

Present:

Staff WIOA: Tracy Giorgio and Bob Coatta NRWIB: Gary Madison

Bidders: Michael Coatta-PAL, Laura Cummings, Betsy Chadwick, Desmond Mahario, Olivia Dudley and Kathi Crowe-WYSS, Liana Cunningham –NVCC, Pam LaRosa NW CT Chamber and Lyn Lawrence-CT DOL

Bob Coatta, American Job Center, Youth Coordinator, opened the meeting by introducing staff and welcoming attendees to the WIOA Year Round In School Bidder's Conference.

**** *Funds are subject to Notice of Availability released by the State of CT, Department of Labor.****

Bob stated that at present the Board has not received notification of funds for next program year.

Bob commented on a question raised at the out at the out of school bidder's conference on how much can a prospective bidder apply for. Bob replied that decision is made by the proposer and that the amount requested and slot level and funds should be such that it is manageable and will be able to meet performance levels.

Time Line

The time line was explained as follows:

- ❖ RFP's to be submitted by Thursday, April 19, 2018 by 4:00 pm. Submissions later than 4:00 pm will not be accepted.
- ❖ The N.R.W.I.B. Youth Council's Program Committee will meet on Friday, May 11, 2018 to review RFP's.
- ❖ The Program Committee will submit funding recommendations to the Executive Committee of the N.R.W.I.B. Board on Thursday, June 7, 2018.
- ❖ Letters of intent to fund will be sent out on Friday, June 15, 2018.
- ❖ Proposals will be accepted now, so that staff can prepare and review.
- ❖ No submissions will be accepted by fax or email. Submissions may be hand delivered.

Proposers were required to attend the Bidder's Conference. Attendees were required to bring copy of RFP. No copies were provided.

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Bob stated that participants cannot start until July 1, 2018. The period of June 1- June 30, 2018 can only be used for recruitment and worksite development. No other activities can be supported during this time period,

Introduction and background

Bob gave a very brief overview of the background and introduction of WIOA & NRWIB as follows:

The NRWIB is the administrative entity that oversees and administers WIOA and CT-DOL funded programs in the Northwest Region Service Delivery Area (SDA). It was established by the Governor to promote effective delivery of job training services throughout the region that includes the 41 municipalities.

Bob noted the following: this request for proposal (RFP) does not commit the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal under this request or to procure a contract for services or supplies. The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request; to negotiate with all qualified sources or to cancel in part or in its entirety this request for proposal; if it is not in the best interest of the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board.

The NRWIB is seeking qualified vendors to provide year round WIOA approved services for in school youth. NRWIB is seeking partners in the community who will work with young people and staff at NRWIB to help area youth succeed in the workplace. Prospective vendors should craft creative and innovative programs that are youth centered and focused; in addition to being cost effective and providing measurable, quantifiable outcomes.

Bob reiterated that funding under WIOA now mandated that 75% of funds must be targeted to out of school youth and that now drastically reduces funds available for in school youth.

Bob stated that the other area that is critical to the success or failure of a program is the manner in which follow up services are provided and documented for those 12 months following a youth's exit. In other words the documentation associated with follow up determines if a program is successful or not

General Information Regarding Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Bob explained the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) how it is intended to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act making it the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system. This revitalization workforce system will be characterized by three critical hallmarks of excellence.

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- The needs of business and workers drive workforce solutions
- One Stop Centers (or AKA American Job Centers) provide excellent customer service to job seekers and employers and focus on continuous improvement and
- The workforce system support strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

Across the system, continued improvement is supported through evaluation, accountability, identification of best practices and data driven decision making.

WIOA will incorporate the growing consensus of researchers that young people making the transition to working adulthood need more than narrow training and skills programs. Programs must address the development of the entire individual through services such as mentoring, community service, guidance counseling, and financial literacy that will lead to the attainment of recognized secondary and or post-secondary credentials.

WIOA mandates that a broad array of program elements be made available to in school youth. The inclusion of the 14 required program elements reinforces that the law intends us to foster programs that are grounded in “best practices”- and to provide youth with approaches that work best for them. Bob explained that as part of RFP’s that are submitted that all 14 elements need to be addressed and made available to the youth being served. Bob added that some of these elements a vendor can provide but there might be other elements that might require collaboration with another agency / school etc.

Summer Year Round In School Programs

Summer/year round programs was noted that must now provide every participant with linkages to academics and connect to academics and connect to occupational learning of some kind throughout the year. Program outcomes will be measured in terms of attainment of a credential- diploma or certificate, retention in employment, training and or post-secondary education, earnings gained as well as in terms of program skills gained participation levels. Without significant collaboration these requirements will almost certainly have impacts on the number of young people served by an area’s in school program since increased intensity usually signals increased costs.

Work Experience

Bob stated that under the WIOA legislation a minimum of 20% of funds requested need to be spent on work experience activities, but to ensure that the 20% is met the Board is requiring that 30% of funds are dedicated to work experience activities. Note below acceptable work experience activities. Work experience activities also must include academic and occupational education. Also work experience activities can take place in for profit along with public and nonprofit worksites. They can include:

1. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year

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2. Internships and job shadowing
3. Pre apprenticeship programs and registered apprenticeships
4. On the job training

Youth Programs must track program funds spent on work experiences, activities including wages, stipends and incentives for youth, as well as staff costs for the development and management of work experiences and report such as part of required reporting. Bob referenced page 28 budget form.

Also mentioned was that work readiness skills workshops are allowable expense when tracking work experience funds but should be connected to a work experience opportunity.

Follow Up Services

Bob stated that follow up is very important and is the key to a successful program. The key words in this is required element is services and trust. In the past, phone calls to see if kids were working sufficed as follow up, under WIOA, services must be offered to young people for 12 months beyond their participation. Activities such as alumnae groups or career planning; as well as connections to supportive services and comprehensive guidance and counseling must now be offered for at least one year. Documentation is now required for follow up. Follow-up needs to be detailed with accurate information. Types of documentation that can be used are things such as: report cards, class schedules, transcripts and paystubs to name a few but regardless some form of documentation must be on file that verifies the status of exited youth during the twelve months of follow up. Follow up services will be instrumental in meeting performance measures, which under WIOA now are the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit.

Performance

Placement in Employment, Education or Training

This measure is determined by the number of participants who are employed (including military service) or enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training/occupational skills training by the end of the second quarter after exit. The operational parameters are as follows:

Individuals that were employed and / or enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training / occupational skills training at the date of registration are excluded from this measure.

All individuals in secondary school at the time of exit are included in this measure regardless of their employment or post-secondary or training status

Employment and education status at the date of participation are based on information collected from the individual.

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Credential attainment of diploma or certificate: this measure is determined by those youth enrolled in education at any point during the program, the number of participants who attain a diploma or certificate by the end of the **fourth quarter** after the exit quarter.

Earnings after entry into unsubsidized employment: measured earnings of participant's in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit. CT DOL looks at hourly rate.

Bob stated that it is crucial documentation accompanies all follow up otherwise it cannot be reported out in CT Hires.

In Program Skills Gain

This will be measured by the percentage of participants in education leading to credential or employment during program year, achieving measurable gains. This measure will be done / documented in real time; and Bob noted that in the case of a youth being in a program multiple years the youth can get one skill gain per program year. Bob handed out the breakdown of four skill types and what can be used to document the attainment of that skill.

Adult Mentoring

Bob covered the mentoring topic by stating mentoring is strongly suggested which will be helpful during follow up services. Mentoring builds relationships with the youth participants and should be incorporated in the planning of a program design.

A question was raised by Ms. Chadwick attendee as to who are the mentors. Bob answered it is who you want them to be they could be paid staff assigned to the program or volunteers from within the community or graduate students required to do an internship for their degree.

Bob pointed out that all enrollees must participate in both the summertime component and year round component to be considered as full time participants in the program.

He went over summer components specifications.

Summer Component Specifications are:

- 1) Participants shall be engaged in a work experience activity- 20 hours a week
- 2) Participants shall receive the prevailing minimum wage per hour (\$10.10). Participants shall work a **total** of 5 weeks during the summer months starting after July 1, 2018
- 3) Summer supervisors may begin work one week prior to the enrollees and may work for a maximum of 7 weeks.
- 4) Programs shall be designed to serve a minimum of 5 participants.
- 5) The ratio of supervisors to enrollees must be at least 1 to 10
- 6) Programs shall be designed to promote equity to special populations including females, minorities, limited English proficiency, handicapped, children in Foster Care and teen parents.

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- 7) Programs shall be designed to overcome sex stereotyping in occupations traditional for the other sex shall promote nontraditional employment.
- 8) Programs shall target youth who are experiencing barriers to employment and who are most in need of services. These groups include, but are not limited to handicapped youth, youth with limited English proficiency, youth lacking basic skills and youth who may currently have had or had problems with the Juvenile Justice System.
- 9) If more than 25 percent of the participants are classified as handicapped, reasonable attempts should be made by program services available in the area to meet their needs. A description of coordination of services to handicapped youth must be provided. There shall be a maximum 10 to 1 ration between participants and instructors.

He went over year round component specifications

Year Round Component Specifications are:

- 1) A seamless process originating with the summer work experience component shall be extending throughout the school year in order to serve participants.
- 2) Year round services must be based on the 14 WIOA required program elements. Connections between academic/basic skills, work readiness skills and work experience activities (see page 7 in RFP) shall be incorporated in the total program design. All proposals shall detail the manner in which these three required elements would be provided to participants.
- 3) Services for in school youth shall be provided outside school hours at a minimum of four hours per week during the school year component.

Recruiting and Screening

Recruitment for all training/employment services and programs will be the obligation of the bidder. Bob added the bidder must include a proposed plan for recruitment. Eligible youth will need to be assessed through the development of an Individual objective assessment and individual service strategy (ISS). CRI staff is very flexible will accommodate vendors eligibility and CASAS testing is needed to be done.

Eligibility Requirements

A youth attending school as defined by State law and not younger than 14 or older than 24 unless they are disabled and attending school under State Law is low income and

Is:

- a. Basic skills deficient.
- b. An English language learner.
- c. An offender.
- d. Homeless individual as defined in Violence against Women Act.

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- e. Homeless child/youth as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act.
- f. A runaway.
- g. In foster care or has aged out of the foster care system.
- h. Eligible for foster care assistance or in an out of home placement.
- i. Pregnant or parenting.
- j. A youth who is an individual with a disability.
- k. Requires additional assistance to be deemed by the NRWIB.
- l. Is receiving or is eligible for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. Is receiving or is eligible of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. **In schools where the whole school automatically receives free or reduced price lunch, WIOA programs must base low income status on an individual student's eligibility to receive free or reduced price lunch or on meeting one of the other low income categories under WIOA. Two guidelines are used. (Changes in TEGAL 21-16 were referenced)**

Earned income has changed as unemployment, child support and social security regular are now counted.

Bob referenced the free and reduced lunch eligibility as it related to Waterbury. Since all youth in the Waterbury public school system are eligible for free / reduced lunch income based on 185% of poverty level is used to determine eligibility

Prior to moving on Bob explained to everyone that those youth indicated above that have barriers need to be considered.

Specifications and required services for WIOA Youth Programs

Bob highlighted specifications for the RFP that need to be specified in the proposal.

General requirements for any in school programming/services must adhere to the 14 program elements as prescribed under WIOA. Activities should truly be year round, i.e. operating continuously throughout the year in a seamless process originating in the summer and extending throughout the year.

Minimum Wage

Individuals employed in activities authorized under the Act must be paid at least the prevailing minimum wage rate of \$10.10 per hour in CT as of January 1, 2017.

Liability Insurance

In regards to liability insurance and workers compensation proof has to be submitted. It was stated that before a contract is signed off on, those two insurances need to be in place. The insurances do not need to go with the proposal at point of submission. Insurance has to hold N.R.W.I.B. harmless.

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OSHA Requirements

A safe environment has to be provided to participants. Keeping in mind this has to be a meaningful work experience into a possible career path.

Union Requirements

To ensure the most effective development and training opportunities, written concurrence from appropriate bargaining agent, if applicable, must be submitted to NRWIB along with the complete program proposal. **If union concurrence is required for work site agreements, this concurrence can be provided with work site agreements at a later date.**

Policy and Procedure

All subcontractors must provide a Policy and Procedure outline to WorkForce Connection office as part of the submission. It should include: absenteeism, makeup hours, warnings, and terminations.

Publicity

The next area addressed concerned publicity. Bob affirmed that in all contracts with the Board require vendors to name the Board as the funding source for the program. Bob stressed the importance of this and said that it is checked by staff. This would include projects, TV ads, commercials, radio ads, and advertisements, publications and annual reports.

Worksite agreements

Any agency submitting a WIOA program will now need to have signed worksite agreements in place prior to program startups. Each worksite agreement will provide slot levels, day and hours of the work experience, contact names and phone numbers of onsite supervisor and alternate supervisor, general description of job duties and signature pages for contracted agency, host worksite and Board signature and if applicable union sign off

Monitoring

In regard to monitoring, this is done both fiscally and programmatically, during the program year by designated staff that can be from NRWIB, State DOL, or the Federal Government. The programmatic monitoring will be done by Career Resources staff, while fiscal monitoring is conducted by NRWIB staff and the Board's Auditor Failure to meet program standards may be reason for sanctions and subject to corrective actions and guidance by NRWIB or subject to the loss of the contract.

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Eligible proposers

All organizations, schools, Boards of Education, community based organizations training providers and employers interested in and capable of providing a holistic WIOA in school youth program may apply. Bob proposed that some organizations may want to collaborate and it is encouraged, however someone needs to be the fiduciary.

Bob announced that if proposals can be turned in early than the deadline that is helpful to staff.

Bob pointed out the importance of having persons authorized to sign off has to be listed on the form on page 29 submitted in RFP. This is particularly important for fiscal staff that submits monthly invoices.

A question was raised by Mr. Mahario concerning required attendance at the Bidder's Conference. Bob stated that the only proposals that will be accepted will be from proposers who attended the respective bidder's conference whether it was the in or out of school bidder's conference.

Bob added that the RFP and budget sheets will be available for downloading once the Bidder's conference has ended.

Incentives

The NRWIB adopted a policy regarding the incentive policy. Incentives are permitted for recognition and achievement related to training and work experiences. Bob pointed out incentives are optional and at the discretion of the proposer.

It can include:

1. Completion of training program summarized in IEP
2. Completion of an unpaid work experience
3. Attainment of industry recognized credential

It was noted that incentives cannot include entertainment such as movie or sporting event tickets, gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment. He gave example of Nurse assistant training program cannot award incentives.

Point Assignment of the RFP

Bob went over the point assignment of the RFP and prerequisites of the proposal. Bids must achieve a passing score of 80% to be considered for funding. Proposals that do not meet the required format will not be considered for funding and will be dismissed. At length the review process for RFP's and the four steps that make up this process were discussed; he referred to the RFP for detailed explanations. Bob pointed out that the budget narrative has to reflect the

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budget summary. Vendors are not responsible for paying unemployment compensation. The main factor in selecting agencies to deliver services shall be the success of that agency in delivering comparable services based on demonstrated performance. Bob reminded the group that demonstrated performance is part of the review process. He has past performance from the establishment of the relationship including year by year performance which includes credential attainment and quarterly retention programmatic and narrative for each contractor.

Bob noted that no purchase of equipment can be included and specifically cited software.

Leveraging funds will not mandatory is favorable in the proposal.

NRWIB does not pay any costs incurred by any proposer in the preparation of a proposal.

Bob spoke about budget pages. It is important to be accurate and break out amounts. The purpose and need should be explained as well as calculated. All costs have to be direct and documented in the narrative. Leveraged funds need to be identified.

Bob went over what was included in the appendix such as forms (budget & work experience & authorized representatives) , glossary of terms, policies such as selective service, mandated reporting, Puerto Rican birth certificates, worksite agreement

Conclusion of Meeting

He reminded attendees that the notes of this meeting will be posted on the NRWIB's website www.nrwib.org.