

**WIOA Out of School PY 2018 – 2019
Bidder's Conference
Tuesday, April 3, 2018 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Recorder: Tracy Giorgio**

Present:

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

Bidders: Laura McCarthy & Susan Dichter- NCCC, J Lynn Lawrence – CT DOL, Victoria Petruziello- DPS/WERACE, Tom Thomassen –CAAWC, Jill Cretella & Elise Quanranta, Marrakech, Tracy Mahar & Mitch Holmes NVCC, Laura Cummings, Betsey Chadwick & Desmond Mahario –WYSS, Angela Holmes & Jocelyn Torres –Waterbury Hospital, Pam LaRosa NW CT Chamber and Rev. Elaine Burke - Alpha & Omega

Bob Coatta, AJC Youth Coordinator, opened the meeting by introducing staff and welcoming attendees to the WIOA Year Round Out of School Bidder's Conference.

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

At present we do not have final funding amount.

A question was raised by Ms. Chadwick regarding the amount of funds that can be requested for. Bob addressed the question by stating that it is up to the bidder as to how much that feel they would be needed to operate their proposed program. There is no cap amount.

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.
- ❖ Early proposals will be accepted, so that staff can prepare and review.
- ❖ No submissions will be accepted by fax or email. Submissions may be hand delivered.

It was noted, in the bidder's list letters that all proposers were required to attend the Bidder's Conference and required to bring a copy of RFP. Once a bidder is funded questions regarding fiscal issues can be addressed with Cheryl Chasse and for programmatic issues contact Bob Coatta.

Introduction and background

Staff, youth coordinator Bob Coatta gave introduction and background on the program 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.

A Question raised by Ms. Chadwick regarding slot level funding. Bob answered that slot level and funding go hand in hand and it is up to the bidder to determine what they feel is an appropriate number to serve and an amount to request, keeping in mind that all program need to meet required performance measures.

Bob read: this request for proposal 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 out of school youth. NRWIB is seeking partners in the community who will work collaboratively with young people and staff at NRWIB to help area youth succeed in the workplace. This collaboration requires that vendors craft creative and innovative approaches that are youth centered and focused, in addition to being cost effective and providing measurable, quantifiable outcomes. Bob referred to pie chart. This chart explains how he wants things done, who the target group is, recruitment, program services & follow up. You have to be creative when developing program he emphasized.

In preparing a response, it is important that applicants create an innovative approach to retention and follow-up services. Be sure to address in response to the RFP how you will provide quality retention and follow up services. Key to a successful program is to develop trust. This is an important factor in follow up. Bob could not emphasize enough this. Trust will pay off and you will be able to get back up documentation that is required.

Youth development is the ongoing process in which all young people are engaged and invested while attempting to meet their basic personal and social needs and to build

competencies necessary for successful adolescent and adult life. Bob highlighted that these have to be incorporated in proposal in creative way: a sense of structure and safety, belonging and mastery, self-worth and ability to contribute, independence and control over one's life, closeness and several good relationships and competency and mastery.

General Information Regarding Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

General information regarding WIOA was provided as follows by Bob:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 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.

- 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 and practitioners 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 youth funds are aimed at young people who are both in and out of school, to assist them in their career and educational development. These funds are allocated to states by the US Department of Labor using formula based on a number of factors detailed in the WIOA legislation. Most importantly at least 75% of funds must be used for out of school youth. The types of services funded include training and youth development programs for young people who have left school, as well as after school services and employment supports for young people still in school.

The WorkForce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) signed into law on July 22, 2014, is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in 15 years. The law supersedes the WorkForce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. It was implemented in 2015 but final regulations became effective July 1, 2016.

Elements

WIOA mandates that a broad array of program elements be made available to out of school youth. The inclusion of the 14 required program elements reinforces that the law intends to foster programs that are grounded in “best practices”- and to provide youth with approaches that work best for them. Planner’s program designers and service providers will recognize that WIOA’s mandate is another opportunity for improving quality of services that are provided through Department of Labor funds. Many of the program elements required in the law are familiar; some elements are new or are “enhanced” under WIOA and require that we look carefully at their design, and avoid the “business as usual” approach so clearly rejected by the act’s regulatory language. The elements have to be included or have linkages to them.

Out of school youth are susceptible population with complicated needs. They face dim difficult employment prospects and uncertain future. Programs have to include occupational learning, as well linkages to academics. Outcomes will be measured in terms of attainment of a credential (diploma of certificate), retention of employment, training and or post-secondary, earnings gained as well.

Work Experience

Work experience for youth-local youth programs must expend not less than 20% of the funds allocated to them to provide ISY and OSY with paid and unpaid work experience opportunities. To assure that work experience funds for both ISY and OSY are met the NRWIB is requiring that a minimum of 30% of requested funds are solely dedicated to work experience activities. It was also stated that when crafting one’s budget it requires that two budgets are submitted one for the full grant and the other budget is for work experience activities. Bob referenced page 29 in the RFP.

Programs must track funds spent on paid and unpaid work experiences, including wages, stipends and incentives for youth, as well as staff costs for the development and management of work experiences and report such expenditures as part of the invoicing WIOA financial requirements.

Bob explained that work experiences are planned, structure learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate. A work experience may take place in the private for profit sector; nonprofit sector or public sector. Keep in mind that labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship exists; therefore funds provided for work experience may not be used to directly or indirectly aid in the filling of a job opening that is vacant because of labor dispute or work stoppage. Work experiences must include academic and occupational education. The educational component may occur concurrently or sequentially with the work experience. Further academic and occupational education may occur inside or outside the worksite.

Types of work experiences include the following categories:

1. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year
2. Internships and job shadowing experiences
3. Pre-apprentices programs and registered apprenticeships

Bob spoke about work readiness skills and the need to incorporate workshops / group sessions to relevant skills such as resumes financial literacy etc. All workshops that are provided will require an outline that shall include the skill being provided, a narrative and hours dedicated to that skill. These soft skill workshops should be integrated with work experience opportunities whether paid or unpaid.

Bob also stated that contracted vendors should spend considerable time working with their youth to identify possible career pathways and as such try to set up work experience opportunities that follow that career path. Examples include criminal justice perhaps work in police department or parole office or human services set up internships in community based organization. In other words the work experience should be tailored to the youth's interest.

Follow Up Services

The key word in this is required element is "services". 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 are instrumental in meeting performance measures, which aside from the attainment of a credential and measureable skill gains under WIOA occur after the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit.

Bob strongly emphasized that during the 12 months of follow up is when performance is measured so it becomes extremely important that a level of trust is developed during that time a youth is actively involved in training so when time comes to report out follow up the chances of getting the documentation to verify what the exited youth is doing can be recorded in CT Hires.

A question was raised by Ms. Chadwick regarding budgeting for follow up Bob responded that needs to be figured into the budget when crafting the RFP.

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.

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.

A question was raised by Ms. Cretella regarding CASAS testing and who would do it. Bob stated that CRI staff from the American Job Center would administer CASAS testing handle that.

Adult Mentoring

Bob explained that mentoring is a key element to the success of a program and can be a valuable tool when time comes for follow up.

Bob stated whoever is the point of contact becomes a surrogate parent and as such will need to deal with day to day issues arise in order to keep the participant engaged in the program.

Required Program Elements- Bob reference the 14 program elements and stated that when preparing the RFP they will need to be addressed

1. Tutoring, study skills training and instruction, leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school services
3. Occupational skill training with a focus on a recognized post-secondary credential and in demand occupations
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing, summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning
5. Integrated education and training for a specific occupation or cluster
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours.
7. Support services
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
9. Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral
11. Financial literacy
12. Entrepreneurial skills training
13. Services that provide labor market information about in demand industry sectors and occupations
14. Post-secondary preparation and transitions activities

Basic Youth Principles

Program needs to include:

- A. Adult support/caring and knowledgeable adults
- B. Structure and expectations
- C. Creative forms of learning
- D. Holistic approach
- E. Youth as resources
- F. Implementation quality
- G. Follow-up services

Recruiting and Screening

Recruitment for all training/employment services and programs will be the responsibility of the bidder. The bidder must include a proposed plan for recruitment. This plan must detail how the bidder plans to recruit participants for the proposed program and include specific outreach activities. All interested out of school youth referred by the bidder and or walk in clients to the American Job Center will need to be determined eligible for program services by Career Resources, Inc. staff. Eligible youth will need to be assessed with CASAS reading and math to determine basic skills levels. This process must be completed for all eligible youth prior to participation in any activity. Priority will need to be given to eligible applicants most in need who are:

- A. A school dropout
- B. A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter
- C. A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low income individual and who is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner
- D. An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult system
- E. A homeless individual; homeless child; runaway; foster child or have aged out of foster care; a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the social security act (42 USC 677) or a youth in an out of home placement
- F. A youth with a disability
- G. A low income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

Bob emphasized that youth with the above barriers should be considered for programming and any outreach to local programs that deal with these populations.

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) A school dropout
- b) A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter
- c) A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low income individual and who is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner
- d) An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
- e) A homeless individual; homeless child; runaway foster child or have aged out of foster care; a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the social security act (42 U.S.C. 677); or a youth in an out of home placement
- f) An individual who is pregnant or parenting
- g) A youth with a disability

- h) A low income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

How are service providers selected

The primary consideration in selecting agencies/organizations/vendors to deliver services shall be the effectiveness of that agency in delivering comparable services based on demonstrated performance. Performance factors shall include performance goals, costs, quality of training and participant target groups. Procurement of service providers must be conducted in a manner that provides for full and open competition and prevents the existence of conflicting roles that might bias judgement and cause unfair competitive advantage. Such actions must assure separation of those who develop or issue the solicitation, or are involved in the selection process, from those who bid upon it.

Bob explained that all past performance of any youth vendor dating back the past eighteen year has been kept and that information is given to the program committee so that a fair and equitable decision on funding can be made.

General requirements for any out of 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. Activities for the program design and program elements must be included and age appropriateness for the population being served. Activities should begin with execution of the contract and continue through June 30, 2019, not including follow up services.

- a) Occupational skills training and or GED/High School Diploma
- b) Employability skills development and or with basic skills development
- c) Supportive services i.e. childcare, transportation, uniform reimbursement, and other support services as appropriate
- d) Paid and unpaid work experience
- e) Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- f) Financial literacy and entrepreneurial education/training
- g) Leadership development opportunities
- h) Work based learning projects
- i) Labor market information about in demand occupations
- j) Post-secondary preparation and transition activities

Minimum Wage

Individuals employed in activities such as paid internships / work experiences 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. Bob reported that he has seen \$12.00 to \$14.00 per hour. It depends on work experience.

OSHA Requirements

Have to make sure safe and comply with OSHA requirements.

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.

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 all vendors are required 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. Bob stated anything and everything produced and published has to note funding by the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board.

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. Union has to sign off, form is to be included in RFP.

Worksite agreements

Any agency submitting a WIOA program that contains a work experience paid or unpaid will be required to submit completed work site agreements prior to any youth taking part in such an activity. Only agencies that receive awards shall be required to complete this. No programs will be able to start without signed worksite agreement(s). Bob assured this is protection for youth and Board.

Monitoring

In regard to monitoring, this is done both fiscally and programmatically, during the program year by designated staff that can be from the Board, State DOL, or the Federal Government. Career Resources staff will do the programmatic monitoring; while the fiscal monitoring is conducted by NRWIB staff. Bob stated that if issues come up in a monitoring visit whether it is fiscal or programmatic a corrective action will need to be done in order to address findings.

Incentives: Bob handed out the Board's policy on incentives and explained that at last years' bidder conference the policy had not been drafted but since then it was passed by the Board. Bob went over the policy

The NRWIB adopted a policy regarding the incentive policy. Incentives are permitted for recognition and achievement related to training and work experiences for the following

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

However incentives cannot include entertainment such as movie or sporting event tickets, gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment.

Question was raised by Ms. Petruziello as to whether incentives are required Bob stated that they are optional and up to the vendor

Bob reviewed the following points regarding the RFP as noted below

The period of performance is July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. Training should be available throughout the program year, and approved programs will be expected to start up July 1, 2018.

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

Proposals, dealing with specific target groups, programs offering unique training, and the ability to leverage other funding streams with actual dollars are a plus when considering funding by the Board.

Bids must get a passing score of 80. RFPs that do not follow the format will not be considered and will be dismissed.

Upon submission there needs to be 1 original with original signatures plus 10 copies and a flash drive

Budget

Bob spoke about budget pages and the importance of breaking out the fringe benefits by line item so that it is easier to read and check for accuracy.

All contracts are cost reimbursement up to the full amount of the contract.

Bob referenced page 30 of the RFP Authorized Representative Sign Off page and that anyone especially fiscal folks should be included.

Bob added that the RFP and budget sheets (excel) will be available for downloading now that the Bidder's conference has been completed.

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

Bob stated that in preparing a response it is important that applicants create an innovative approach to recruitment, training , retention and follow up services.

He reminded attendees that the notes of this meeting will be posted on the NRWIB's website www.nrwib.org. No questions can be answered from this point on. Bidders need to be present at this conference to apply.