



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for

Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)

Vocational Education-Occupational Skills Training, Subsidized Employment and Adult-Educational Services

for the

**Recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) residing in the
Southwestern Connecticut Service Delivery Area**

Program Year 2010-2011

July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

BIDDERS' CONFERENCE	Tuesday, April 27, 2010, at 10:00 AM at The WorkPlace, 350 Fairfield Avenue, 3 rd Floor Conference Room A, Bridgeport, CT 06604
RETURN DEADLINE	Wednesday, May 19th, 2010 at 12:00 NOON

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SECTION I - BACKGROUND

The WorkPlace, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit 501(c) (3) corporation that coordinates job training, employment, and educational services in a region composed of twenty (20) municipalities¹. It develops working partnerships with local community leaders, elected officials, business, labor, and education leaders to create a competitive economic environment by improving the area's workforce education, employment and training opportunities. The WorkPlace, Inc., as the administrative entity for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), serves more than 22,000 individuals each year.

On Feb. 8, 2006 President George W. Bush signed the Deficit Reduction Act. This law reauthorizes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program administered by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In general, adult TANF recipients are expected to become self-sufficient within a limited period of time, which in Connecticut is twenty-one (21) months. The "**Balanced Work First**" principle of welfare reform (as adopted by the CT Departments of Labor and Social Services) means that participants are encouraged to develop workforce attachment as soon as possible by engaging in work or a work activity prior to or concurrent with receiving training. Those welfare recipients who have the least skills, education, and work experience, and who live within high poverty areas, need additional assistance to obtain lasting jobs and become self-sufficient. In Connecticut, the overall program that is responsible for providing these services is called **JFES - Jobs First Employment Services** (formerly referred to as the JFES program.)

The JFES goals are:

- to enable Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) recipients, through employment, to become independent from cash assistance by the end of the 21 month time limit established by state law and to attain income levels that allow them to remain employed and independent of TFA assistance;
- to ensure that federally established participation rates are met through employment of TFA participants and engagement in other allowable TANF work activities deemed appropriate based on assessments of participants' needs.

With this Request for Proposals (RFP), The WorkPlace, Inc. solicits proposals from qualified contractors who can demonstrate the capacity to design and implement **occupational skills training** and or **subsidized employment** projects responsive to the needs of eligible TFA cash recipients and the employers who can provide them with work opportunities. Knowing the customer base and developing programs specifically geared towards their needs is critical to a successful program.

SECTION II - GENERAL RFP PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

ELIGIBLE PROPOSERS

All organizations (for-profit and not-for-profit), schools, boards of education, faith-based, community-based education and training providers, and employers interested in and capable of providing a package that includes occupational skills training, placement and retention services for time-limited TFA recipients are encouraged to submit proposals. Organizations can submit proposals together as partners/collaborators, as long as one of the agencies takes the lead as the main proposer/contractor, with the other organization(s) as subcontractor(s.) A **Letter of Agreement** must be included as part of the proposal in cases where this type of arrangement exists. While it is not required that all details of the breakdown of responsibilities and payments be stated in the letter, it is advisable for the sake of both partners and the smooth operation of the program that as many of these details as possible (including monetary arrangements) be worked out and agreed to in advance.

Who cannot respond: An organization shall not be considered if:

- It has been debarred by an action of any governmental agency;
- It owes Federal and/or State taxes
- It owes Unemployment Insurance taxes;
- It has had a previous contract with any governmental entity in Connecticut terminated for cause;
- It has not complied with an official order of any agency of the State of Connecticut or the United States Department of Labor to repay disallowed costs incurred during its conduct of projects or services.

¹ Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bridgeport, Darien, Derby, Easton, Fairfield, Greenwich, Monroe, New Canaan, Norwalk, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, Stamford, Stratford, Trumbull, Westport, Weston and Wilton.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

A total of approximately **\$400,000** is available to provide services to the (estimated) 1,200 (average/ month) time-limited TFA recipients that reside throughout the Southwestern Connecticut Service Delivery Area. Approximately \$250,000 will be contracted for Occupational Skills Training. The remaining \$150,000 will be utilized to contract for Subsidized Employment Programs. Since these funds, combined with other available resources, must provide some level of employment services for all who need them, it is imperative that programs be innovative in their program design and demonstrate how they will provide the most cost effective services in the areas where they are most needed. **Leveraging of additional funds, while not required, would certainly make a program more desirable.**

QUESTIONS AND PROPOSERS' CONFERENCE

The WorkPlace will conduct a Bidders' Conference on **Tuesday, April 27, 2010, 10:00AM** at: The WorkPlace, 350 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT, 3rd floor Conference Room A. (Directions are included in the Attachments.) WorkPlace staff will discuss and answer questions regarding this RFP. All interested proposers are strongly encouraged to attend the conference as **WorkPlace staff will not be allowed to answer questions about the RFP after the conference** (unless they pertain specifically to apparent contradictions in the RFP or the RFP format). All proposers are asked to **READ RFP PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE** and RSVP your intention to attend to Nestor Leon by telephone at (203) 610-8556 or via email at nleon@workplace.org

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance under this RFP will be **(12) twelve months**. The initial contract period will begin as soon as possible after **July 1, 2010**, and end on **June 30, 2011**. Services under this contract should be available throughout the program year and approved programs will be expected to start up operations and accept referrals as soon as possible after July 1, 2010.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Proposals will be received and maintained consistent with applicable Connecticut Open Records laws. Due regard will be given to the protection of proprietary information contained in all proposals received. However, bidders should be aware that all materials associated with this procurement are subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act and all rules, regulations and interpretations resulting therefrom. It will not be sufficient for bidders merely to state generally that a proposal is proprietary in nature and therefore not subject to release to third parties. Those particular pages which a bidder believes to be proprietary must be specifically identified as such. Convincing explanation and rationale to justify exception from release consistent with Section 1-19 of the Connecticut General Statutes must accompany the proposal. The rationale and explanation must be stated in terms of: 1) the prospective harm to the competitive position of the bidder that would result if the identified material were to be released, and 2) the reasons why the materials are legally exempt from release pursuant to the above-cited statute. Rationale and explanation of the proprietary nature of all such pages or portions thereof, as described above, should be included as an attachment.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES UTILIZATION

Proposers may coordinate with local community-based or educational organizations in the development of their projects. This involvement may include providing complementary services (including remediation or other specialized activities) concurrently, or through co-location with organizations that provide other educational or support services to TFA recipients. Leveraging of funding to provide these additional services to TFA recipients would add value to the proposal.

Preparation of Proposals

FORMAT

All Sections noted within this RFP are required and must be addressed in the proposal, *following the instructions* provided and *answering all questions* completely.

Proposals should be formatted on 8½ by 11-inch paper, with one (1)-inch margins using the minimum of 12 point type.

To be considered for funding, proposal should be submitted by either of two options:

(a) Electronic: email as attachments (no larger than 2MB) to Info-RFP@workplace.org

(b) Hard Copy: At least one (1) copy of the proposal should be in loose-leaf form, that is, not stapled or bound and easily accessible for photocopying., Proposers are required to submit one (1) signed original proposal and four (4) copies of the proposal along with a CD with a copy of the proposal in MS Office Word 2003 or higher version.

- To facilitate the review process, all proposal pages must be **numbered**.
- Proposers may NOT submit extraneous material such as brochures or newspaper articles. Proposers also may NOT bind proposals in any way. All extraneous material (including cover letters) or bindings *will be removed* prior to the rating process.

Any questions you may have on the RFP must be asked either prior to or during the appropriate bidders' Conference. *No questions regarding the RFP will be answered after the Bidders' Conference* unless they pertain specifically to apparent contradictions in the RFP or to the RFP format.

Deadline for Submission of Completed Proposals

To be considered for funding, **Jobs First Employment Services proposals must be received by Wednesday, May 19th, 2010 at 12:00 noon** Proposals received either in person or by mail or email after this deadline will **not be accepted under any circumstances**.

For Electronic Option, email proposal as attachments (no larger than 2MB) to Info-RFP@workplace.org. For Hard Copy Option, submit one (1) signed original proposal and four (4) copies of the proposal along with a CD containing a copy of the proposal in MS Office Word 2003 or higher version.

to:

The WorkPlace, Inc.
Attention: Millie Brighindi
350 Fairfield Avenue (3rd Floor), Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The award of a contract for any proposed Occupational Skills Training services and or Subsidized Employment is contingent upon:

- Favorable evaluation of the proposal in relation to other proposals;
 - Approval of the proposal by The WorkPlace, Inc. Board of Directors;
 - Successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal.
- The WorkPlace, Inc. reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of all contracts with the successful proposer. Items that may be negotiated include, but are not limited to: type and scope of services, costs and prices, service delivery timelines, target groups, management and staffing configurations, location of service delivery and service levels.
 - The WorkPlace, Inc. also reserves the right to accept any proposal, as submitted, for contract award without substantive negotiation of offered terms, services, or costs. Therefore, Proposers are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially.
 - This RFP does not commit The WorkPlace, Inc. to award a contract to any proposer. The WorkPlace, Inc. shall not pay any costs incurred by any proposer in the preparation of a proposal. The WorkPlace, Inc. may accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this RFP or cancel, in part or in its entirety, this RFP if it is in the best interest of The WorkPlace, Inc. to do so.
 - The WorkPlace, Inc. may request additional data or an oral presentation in support of written proposals.
 - The WorkPlace, Inc. may require the proposer selected to participate in negotiations and to submit any price, technical or other revisions of their proposal as may result from negotiation.
 - The WorkPlace, Inc. is responsible for final review and evaluation of proposals and selection of JFES Providers and reserves the right not to fund any or all proposals. Proposals must be complete and must follow the format outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions. The WorkPlace, Inc. may incorporate site visits and/or applicant interviews into the proposal review process.
 - By submission of a proposal, the proposing organization certifies as to its legally constituted status and that status in connection with this proposal:
 - The costs in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication or agreement, for the purpose of restricting competition as to any matter relating to such costs with any other proposer or with any competition;
 - Unless otherwise required by law, the costs which have been quoted in the proposal have not been knowingly disclosed by the proposer, and shall not be disclosed by the proposer, prior to award directly or indirectly to any other proposer or to any competition; and
 - No attempt has been made by the proposer to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

- Selection of the JFES Training Provider shall be conducted in accordance with federal and state provisions which regulate the funds. The WorkPlace, Inc. may choose not to fund the proposer who has the proposal with either the lowest cost or the highest score on the proposal. In addition to the scores obtained through the rating process, The WorkPlace, Inc. may take into account previous experience the proposer has had in implementing similar projects as well as the proposer's capability of initiating services throughout the region in a timely fashion.
- All contract awards are subject to the availability of federal and/or state funds and the execution of a contract acceptable to The WorkPlace, Inc. and the selected proposer.
- Drug Free and Smoke Free Workplace: Proposing organizations should note that if awarded a contract under this RFP, a drug free and smoke free workplace for both employees and customers must be maintained.
- Non-Discrimination: No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with this solicitation on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability and/or any other rights protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Each individual shall have such rights as are available under any applicable Federal, State, or local law prohibiting discrimination. Moreover, programs must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which requires, among other things, that all programs be fully accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Job Vacancies: Any proposer contracted with in response to this RFP shall be expected to list all of their organization's job vacancies with the CTWORKS One Stop Career Center.
- The WorkPlace, Inc. shall perform contract compliance, programmatic and financial monitoring in connection with all provisions of this RFP.

REVIEW PROCESS

An initial screening of all proposals will be conducted by WorkPlace, Inc. staff to insure (1) the proposal was submitted on time, in the proper format and with the required number of copies attached; (2) the proposal is responsive to the RFP and all RFP questions and sections; and (3) all required signatures appear on the document. **If a proposal does not meet the technical requirements of the screening process, it may not continue through the review and rating process and will be returned to the Proposer.**

If the proposal meets the requirements of the screening process, it will then be evaluated by a team consisting of readers from The Department of Labor, Department of Social Services, and employers. Proposals will be scored (in accordance with the schedule which follows) and recommendations made to the Board of Directors of The WorkPlace, Inc., which will approve tentative funding and start-up.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

The WorkPlace, Inc. may take into account previous experience Proposers have in operating a similar type of program to that sought in this RFP. Information regarding successful completion of placement and retention benchmarks, as well as the degree to which the previously operated program matched the requirements of this RFP, will be considered. Proposers who have subcontracted to operate similar training programs in other SDA's or for other state agencies are responsible for providing **written documentation** of their performance *from the funding agency* (names and addresses of previous funders will not suffice). This documentation must include a description of the program offered and the target population, as well as **raw data** regarding the **planned and actual** statistics (percentages are not acceptable) for the required benchmarks. Unsubstantiated performance claims or telephone referrals will not receive consideration.

GRANT AWARDS

The WorkPlace, Inc. Board of Directors will make funding decisions at its June 2010 meeting. Their approval will allow WorkPlace, Inc. staff to provide grant recipients with a preliminary Notice of Approval. Applicants whose proposals were not funded will also be notified.

DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION

Federal regulations require workforce boards to determine if a contractor is debarred, suspended, ineligible or voluntarily excluded from applying for federal funds. This will be done at the same time the "Notice of Approval" is sent to selected proposers. Proposers will be asked to sign a form certifying they are NOT currently debarred, suspended, ineligible or voluntarily excluded from applying for federal funds. **Contract negotiations will not begin until this certification form is signed and returned to The WorkPlace.**

TYPES OF CONTRACT: Jobs First Employment Services contracts awarded under this RFP provide for cost reimbursement up to the maximum amount of the award.

EQUIPMENT: The WorkPlace, Inc. will retain title to all equipment with a value of \$1,000 or more purchased with JFES funds, and a useful life of at least 12 months. Also, contractors will be required to receive prior approval from The WorkPlace, Inc. on all purchases in excess of \$1,000.

PROFIT & PROGRAM INCOME: This is a cost reimbursement contract. Profit will not be allowed as a line item in the budget. Programs will be reimbursed for their actual, demonstrable costs up to the full amount of the contract.

JOBS FIRST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

The Jobs First Employment Services funding available under this RFP is targeted to providing comprehensive **Occupational Skills Training and/or Subsidized Employment** opportunities (including placement and retention) for time-limited TFA cash recipients in the Southwestern Connecticut service delivery area (Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford and the Valley) that will result in attaining, retaining and/or upgrading unsubsidized jobs that will move participants toward economic self-sufficiency. The goals established by the Department of Labor for the Jobs First Employment Services Program are:

- to enable Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) participants, through employment, to become independent from cash assistance by the end of the 21-month time limit established by state law;
- to enable TFA participants who become independent from cash assistance to remain employed and independent of TFA; and
- to ensure that federally established participation rates are met through employment of TFA participants and engagement in other allowable Jobs First Employment Services work activities deemed appropriate based on assessments of participants' needs.

Programs must be developed to assist participants in reaching the above goals by utilizing countable activities that will keep them in compliance with participation standards. While Work First is still the overriding philosophy, programs are encouraged to have available a variety of components that will assist participants in overcoming barriers to employment while job searching, as well as during the first few months on the job. This approach is referred to as **“Balanced Work First.”**

It is the intent of this RFP to solicit proposals for programs offering a holistic approach to training eligible participants and providing a full continuum of both pre-employment and post-employment activities in addition to the Occupational Skills Training and or Subsidized Employment, including the following components:

- **job readiness** (including vocational preparation, and remediation, and subsidized employment or subsidized employment, as needed);
- **day-to-day participant tracking**, assistance and reporting;
- **placement into unsubsidized employment** (leading to full-time work and a sustainable income);
- **up to six-months of post-placement services**, including follow-up, job retention, continued services to promote life-long learning & upgrade employment, and other proactive services to promote economic self-sufficiency.

Programs must be prepared to meet the needs of *all* eligible Jobs First Employment Services participants that may be referred to them, **including** the unemployed, the underemployed, and those who have limited English proficiency.

Guiding Principles for all Jobs First Employment Services programs include:

- 1) keeping a strong focus on work and personal responsibility throughout the program;
- 2) maintaining participation in activities that will contribute to meeting federally mandated work participation rates and help participants reach their goal of financial independence;
- 3) enabling participants to become employed in an unsubsidized position and to retain this employment for a minimum of 6 months;
- 4) helping participants access full-time employment (preferably with benefits) by the end of the six month retention period that will enable them to become independent of TFA cash assistance;
- 5) devising creative ways to provide the services needed at the times and places where eligible participants (especially those who are working or involved in multiple activities) can readily access them; and

6) firmly establishing the principle of life-long learning as an ongoing part of every participant's working career.

Preference will be given to programs that devise innovative, creative ways to provide training services that best meet the needs of the remaining TFA population.

FEDERAL WORK PARTICIPATION RATES

Participants in **all** Jobs First Employment Services activities, including Vocational Training, Job Readiness, Job Search/ Placement, and Subsidized or Unsubsidized Employment, must meet the Federally-mandated work participation rates. All programs funded for Program Year 2010/11 (starting on or after July 1, 2010) will be required to meet the current participation rate for All Families, which remains at **30 hours** per week. Currently, the standard Federal Participation Requirements and their time limitations are as follows:

COUNTABLE ACTIVITIES:

- **Vocational Education** (lifetime limit of 12 months' participation), including pre- or post-employment occupational skills training resulting in new or improved unsubsidized employment (including at least a 10% increase in income for those who were employed at program entry.)
- **Job Readiness/ Job Search Skill Training (JSST)/ Job Placement** - countable for only 4 consecutive weeks + (after a minimum of one week's participation in a different activity), 2 additional weeks, for a total of 6 weeks max. per year
- **Subsidized Employment** (also known as "Job Creation" since it must not displace current workers or replace laid-off workers) - countable if for 20 or more hours/ week + educational activities/ continued job search = up to 35 hours/week
- **On-the-Job Training** (OJT) - through arrangements with employers willing to hire first and provide training
- **Unsubsidized Employment** - at least 20 hours/ week + educational activities = 30 or more hours of participation
- **Remedial Education** (including ESL, ABE or GED) - countable if also participating in any of the above "work activities" for 20 hours/ week.
- **Post-Employment Services** including Job Retention for 6 months after placement in unsubsidized employment, a 10% increase in income through upgrades in salary, hours and/or position, and a continuation of training & education, including occupational skills, remediation or on-the-job training, especially for those who are not yet working full-time.

Countable activities not included in this RFP: Community Service (unpaid, non-mandatory) or Providing Child Care for other Jobs First Employment Services participants performing Community Service.

(See the Attachments for a full description of all the TANF Work Activities.)

NOTE: "Orientation" and other forms of assessment are **not** allowed as separate activities. If included, they must be part of job readiness. Participants will be referred by their case manager to report on the first day of the program, and they will *count* from the day they report. Service must be continuous and uninterrupted from that day.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS/ GOALS

- **Enrollment:** Programs are required to serve *appropriate Jobs First Employment Services participants referred to them by the CTWorks Case Management Staff* with a completed Employment Services referrals Activity Record. (Programs generally **do not have selection rights** but may confer with Case Managers regarding referrals they feel do not meet their established entry criteria. Programs must be able to start up *immediately* at the beginning of the program year (as soon as possible after July 1, 2010) and/ or to accept referrals until the end of the year (June 2011.)
- **Countable Activities:** Programs must carefully plan how they will keep all participants *active at all times in countable activities* (combined, if necessary) which meet the Federal Work Participation Rates (30 hours per week total) during the course of their program participation.
- **Successful Completion:** Occupational Skills Training or Subsidized employment/ Subsidized Work components must have a *minimum 80% successful completion rate based on total enrollment*. A successful completion occurs when a participant either completes the occupational skills training component and begins Job Placement or another countable component, OR **enters unsubsidized employment directly from the training component**. Subsidized employment/ Unsubsidized Employment components will receive a successful completion when participants either complete a minimum of 6 weeks *in the same work assignment* or transition into unsubsidized employment.
- **Placement:** Programs must have a *minimum 70% placement rate based on those who are unemployed at the time of enrollment*. A placement occurs when a participant begins working in **unsubsidized employment** at minimum wage or higher *for any number of hours per week*.
- **90-Day Retention:** Programs must be designed to retain a *minimum of 70%* of their **employed participants** (whether

new placements or those who are employed at program entry) in unsubsidized employment **for at least 90-days** after placement (or enrollment, for those who begin the program year employed, or until the end of the contract period.)

● **6-month Retention:** Programs must be designed to retain a *minimum* of **40%** of their **employed participants** (whether new placements or those who are employed at program entry) *in unsubsidized employment for at least 6 months* (or enrollment, for those who begin the program year employed, or until the end of the contract period.)

● **Payments at or above TFA payment standard + \$90:** Occupational Skills Training Programs must be designed to assure that a *minimum* of **80%** of their employed participants will achieve gross income at or above the TFA payment standard + \$90 (based on the TFA payment standard for a family of three which is currently \$633 per month).

● **Payments at or above the Federal Poverty Level:** Training Programs must be designed to assure that a *minimum* of **50%** of their employed participants will achieve gross income at or above the Federal Poverty Level (based on a family of three) by the completion of the program year.

NOTE: All of the above benchmarks are based on the best information currently available. If the required benchmarks are revised by the Department of Labor in its contract negotiations with The WorkPlace, Inc., subcontractors would be required to meet the revised benchmarks as established by The WorkPlace, Inc.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION: Provide a description of your organization's philosophy, background, and qualifications in providing the *type of program* that you are proposing *with this population*.

NOTE: This section is not rated; its primary purpose is to provide an overview of your organization and its mission for raters who may not be familiar with it. The information provided should be geared toward the organization's experience that is relevant toward working with the TFA population and operating the type of programming being proposed. ***This section should not exceed 2 pages.***

Section 1. PROGRAM NEED (10 points):

New TFA recipients who are assessed as "employment-ready" will be referred primarily to DOL for placement services. This RFP, therefore, does not solicit job search or Work Readiness skills training.

Some longer term TFA recipients may have severe barriers, yet they need to find employment as quickly as possible. For the remaining population the primary need is for vocational education (i.e., occupational skills) combined with life, employability and basic skills (including ESL or English/ math remediation.) This should be provided in the most timely and cost-effective manner possible. Some participants may also need a period of Subsidized Work (including paid subsidized employment) if they have been unsuccessful in accessing unsubsidized employment because of a lack of work experience. Programs must find ways of providing the type of modular services that are needed on an individual (open entry) or small group basis.

In the Proposal: Analyze and document the factors demonstrating that the type of program and number of placements you are proposing are currently ***needed by employers and appropriate for the remaining time-limited TFA population.*** Discuss how the program will provide a good match between the needs of the two groups. Proposers should include a discussion of how the training they are proposing fills a *gap in the Southwestern Connecticut Service Delivery Area* by identifying other agencies providing a similar type of training (or demonstrating convincingly that there are none) and describing how their training differs from others being provided in the area. Letters from employers, described in Sec. 6, must demonstrate *their specific need* for employees in the proposed field and ***their willingness to hire from this population.***

Section 2. TARGET POPULATIONS (8 points):

As Connecticut's Welfare Reform program has progressed, even the general TFA population has changed. Those who remain unemployed are often multi-barriered, many have little or no English capabilities, but all are expected to adhere to the "Balanced Work First" philosophy and become employed and free of cash assistance within their time limit. Many have been unable in the past to access anything beyond very basic, minimum wage positions. Some with *severe language or educational barriers* may or may not be co-enrolled in ESL or GED programs. With a very *poor work history or low educational level*, they may need some subsidized work experience, coaching or training at a work site, as well as more formal training, to qualify even for an entry-level position.

Others are *underemployed* (i.e., currently working but with earnings below the Federal Poverty Level) and need to increase their skills to gain promotion into higher skilled positions offering better pay and advancement opportunities. It is difficult to attend training while maintaining a job and juggling the needs of the family. The parameters of serving these

two groups vary somewhat. The first needs concentrated, full-time study, while the second needs part-time, flexible training available at times that will not interfere with their work schedules and presented in ways that will keep them motivated and involved. While all Programs must serve the unemployed, the proposer must decide whether it will also be able to serve the underemployed, and how it will meet the divergent needs of the 2 groups.

In the Proposal: According to the type of program that you are proposing, identify the *specific group(s)* that you plan to target for service in your program. For ***each*** of the target groups:

- a) clearly *define* the group(s) and the specific *barriers* (personal as well as job-related) that members of each group typically face in finding, upgrading and retaining unsubsidized employment (specify any *limitations* on the participants you would be able to serve, in terms of language barriers, employed participants or other factors);
- b) provide *statistics* or other documentation supporting the number of people anticipated to require the program's services (quality and comprehensiveness of services to be provided, rather than quantity, are sought);c) describe clearly, supported by your program design, *how your program will assist* the target population in overcoming the barriers you have identified, accessing and retaining initial placement into unsubsidized employment, and upgrading into full-time employment with earnings at or above the Federal Poverty Level.

Section 3. RECRUITMENT (5 points):

Entry into Jobs First Employment Services programs will continue to require that participants have a completed Independence Plan, including the Service Needs Assessment conducted by DSS, the Employability Plan and the Employment Services Referral Activity Record, both completed by the CTWorks Case Managers. While official "referrals" must come from the Case Managers, the programs must also conduct outreach to locate members of the target population who are not currently in activities, get them interested in participating, and facilitate their meeting with their Case Manager for assessment and referral. (NOTE: Programs must recognize that, in all cases, final determination of which activities are most appropriate for participants rests with the CTWorks Case Managers. There is no guarantee that participants "recruited" by programs will be referred back to that same program. There may be additional factors which the Case Manager is not at liberty to discuss with the program staff which requires referral to other activities.)

In the Proposal: Describe methods your staff could use to recruit participants into your program by making information available (to both participants and CTWorks Case Management staff) that would help to motivate participants to participate. How could the program help to locate and mobilize potential participants to become involved with the Jobs First Employment Services program? How would you describe your program to a potential participant (such as might be included in a brochure?) Once participants have been referred, how would the program follow-up with/ *engage* them and encourage their willing and active involvement? List all entry requirements that the program would have (including educational background, reading/ math scores, etc.) that further define who would be an appropriate candidate for training in this program.

Note: Jobs First Employment Services programs, in general, ***do not have*** participant selection rights. Funded programs must serve appropriate, time-limited TFA recipients who meet their entry criteria and report to them with a completed referral. Referred participants become ***enrolled on the first day they report*** to the program, and the program assumes day-to-day tracking responsibilities for them at that time. Programs are not responsible for referred participants who never report; however, programs must notify the case manager *immediately* regarding participants who did not report to the program. **Funded programs must work with eligible participants through placement, retention, and day-to-day frontline case tracking, providing a holistic continuum of services that participants will need to reach all Jobs First Employment Services goals.**

Section 4. PROGRAM DESIGN (42 points):

A. Creative, cost-effective approaches to providing *vocational education* are needed throughout the Southwest region. The following **Types of Vocational Education** may be proposed:

1. **Classroom Occupational Skills Training**
2. **Subsidized Employment Opportunities**
3. **On-the-job training [OJT]/ Customized Job Training**
4. **Training vouchers**
5. **Classroom Occupational Skills Training with Integrated Adult Education**

1. ***Classroom Occupational Skills*** training (traditional vocational education) may be offered in fields that require a higher level of skill for entry or promotion and have been demonstrated (in Section 1) to be in demand by employers. To be successful with the current Jobs First Employment Services client flow, where participants are referred for services one or

two at a time throughout the year and the chances of assembling a large group all at once are highly unlikely, training should be provided on a flexible, modular basis, with frequent entry opportunities available (open entry, if possible.) Considering that participants are in a time-limited situation, training should not be excessively long (no more than a few months) and should be available on a full-time (30 hours/ week) basis for those who are unemployed and/ or a part-time, flexible basis for those who are underemployed. Placements should result in jobs paying a salary at or above the federal poverty level for a family of three (currently \$16,090/ year – **or \$309/ week, as of April 2010**). The type of credential or outcome should be in a high growth field. <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/misc/occsindemand.htm>

2. Subsidized Employment component must meet certain requirements:

● **Work Assignment:** Participants will be given 20 hours/ week of paid work in a private or public setting for an average of 8 - 10 weeks. Assignments in Subsidized Employment must assure that placed participants do not displace regular employees.

● **Wages:** Participants must be paid for working hours in compliance with DOL's Fair Labor Standards (see Attachments.) This means that work experience participants must be paid minimum wage by the program, and subsidized employment participants should be paid at the prevailing entry-level wage with all or a share paid by the program, as well as any required payroll taxes (social security, unemployment, worker's comp, etc.)

● **Employer Involvement:** Any program that includes a subsidized employment or work experience component **must demonstrate (through employer letters) that they have established arrangements with employers to provide sufficient opportunities within their worksites.**

● **Curriculum:** Participants will be expected to follow all company rules and meet all employer expectations, and program staff must closely support them and oversee their performance. The Proposal must include a curriculum that will outline what will be learned during the subsidized work experience, how they will be monitored/ evaluated, etc.

● **Continued Job Search:** Unless the work assignment is expected to result in unsubsidized employment, participants must continue their job search during the subsidized employment/ work experience assignment.

● **Education/ Training: Participants must be given an additional 10 or more hours per week of education or training that will increase their employability** (basic ed./ GED preparation, English or math enhancement, or the continued development of occupational skills), as well as make up the remainder of the mandated work participation hours. (Participants may not be *required* to participate more than a total of 35 hours/week for all activities combined.)

● **Length of Participation:** Because this is an expensive component to operate, participation in it cannot continue indefinitely. Placement into unsubsidized employment is still the goal. By the completion of 8 weeks of subsidized work, participants who have not transitioned into unsubsidized employment would be reevaluated to determine the next step:

○ Those who participated in work experience may be granted an extension (if circumstances warrant) to continue in the work experience assignment (as funding allows), or they may be upgraded to a subsidized position (where the employer is willing to pay a part of the salary). Reevaluation of their hiring potential and job search efforts should be made.

○ Participants who started in subsidized employment should be picked up by the employer as an unsubsidized employee, or granted a short (no more than 2 week) extension (if circumstances warrant and funding allows). If an employer seems unwilling to offer unsubsidized employment, the assignment should be reconsidered and additional outside job search efforts implemented.

○ Private Sector subsidized employment or work experience, as a rule, should not last more than 8 weeks. A contract must be signed by the participant, the employer, and program staff to insure that all above criteria is understood and agreed to.

3. **OJT/ customized job training** programs may be designed around the requirements of specific employers who agree to hire participants for full-time, permanent positions, paying at or above the federal poverty level for a family of three, and to provide at least part of the training on-site or coordinated with a work schedule. The description of the training must demonstrate how it exceeds the standard training regularly offered to any new employee learning the job. It might establish an agreement where employers are willing to hire employees who show potential even though they do not meet their usual hiring requirements and to bring them up to the standard required to perform the job through on-the-job training and remediation. *A curriculum must be provided* and the position must require sufficient training that it would result in a level of competence comparable to completion of a training program. The arrangements must be well-documented and every effort made to keep the program's share of the cost as reasonable as possible. [Note: Customized training involves training specific to the needs of an employer, but participants are not considered for hiring until after they have successfully completed the program. OJT is a hire first program.]

4. **Training Vouchers** - Programs may choose to provide occupational skills training by administering training vouchers that allow individualized access to short-term training programs available throughout their community (but not within their own agency. - If programs want to provide training within their own agency, they should apply under #1 above.) A limit would have to be set on the dollar amount available for each voucher (typical *maximum* - \$2,000 or \$1,500 average) and the time frame during which the training must be completed and placement achieved. But a greater variety of types of training programs could be accessed by this means, including but not limited to appropriate programs on the WIA-approved Eligible Providers List. Programs should describe the types of training they would expect to make available through this option, including a list of some specific programs in their area that participants might want to access through the vouchers and their costs (although the vouchers should not be limited to this list). Information regarding the placement outcomes (including wages) that can be expected from completing these types of training should be included. Programs should also describe how they would set-up, administer and monitor the subcontracts/ agreements. If you choose to outsource any portion of this contract, the administering/contracted agency is responsible for providing any and all supplemental services. This includes (but is not limited to) recruitment, maintaining 30 hours/ week participation at all times, providing support to achieve successful completion of training, placement assistance, six month employment retention, and any additional skill sets or supports needed (such as employability/ life skills or basic skills remediation) to assure that the participants have the best possible chance of completing the training and entering full-time, unsubsidized employment. Vouchers could provide the flexibility needed to serve the underemployed segment of the population (but they should not be limited to that subset) as well as allowing more leeway for the unemployed to access different types of training.

5. **Classroom Occupational Skills Training with Integrated Adult Education** training (traditional vocational education) for 20 hours combined with dedicated (adult-ed) educational advancement services resulting in both occupational skills and educational skill attainment. A successful program will have both the occupational and educational training on site. The educational advancement services should be taught from an employment perspective. To be successful with the current Jobs First Employment Services client flow, where participants are referred for services one or two at a time throughout the year and the chances of assembling a large group all at once are highly unlikely, training should be provided on a flexible, modular basis, with frequent entry opportunities available (open entry, if possible.) Considering that participants are in a time-limited situation, training should not be excessively long (no more than a few months) and should be available on a full-time (30 hours/ week) basis for those who are unemployed and/ or a part-time, flexible basis for those who are underemployed. Placements should result in jobs paying a salary at or above the federal poverty level for a family of three (currently \$16,090/ year – or \$309/ week, as of April 2010).

B. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Required Components: Regardless of which type of Vocational Education a program chooses to offer, all Classroom Occupational Skills, Subsidized Employment, OJT/ Customized or Voucher programs ***must provide a detailed curriculum outline including*** all of the following components:

- occupational skills training (refer to description of types above),
- life and employability skills component,
- basic skills remediation (math and language skills),
- job search and placement services, and
- post-employment services during the first six months on the job, including (at a minimum) proactive retention strategies *and* a continued training/ education plan to upgrade the skills of participants and the level of their employment.

1) **Occupational Skills Training** must target in-demand occupations (<http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/misc/occsindemand.htm>) and provide sufficient training to enable participants to access full-time, unsubsidized employment that will result in wages at or above the Federal Poverty Level within the first six months of employment. In addition to the training curriculum, programs must detail the types of jobs graduates can be expected to access, the starting (weekly) salary range and the potential for advancement in the field (as well as what future steps would be needed to achieve that advancement.)

2) **The Life and Employability Skills component** includes training in job search techniques and preparation, as well as assistance in understanding what it takes to deal with (personal or professional) barriers on the job and in their lives, so that participants may be well prepared to retain employment and work their way up into better positions.

3) **Basic Skills Remediation:** Since so many of the remaining TFA participants lack a high school diploma and/ or test as deficient in basic skills in English (speaking, reading or writing) and math, it is now required that a basic skills remediation component be provided on an ongoing basis for at least a few hours per week throughout the course of the program. Depending on the Target Population, this component may be geared toward English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Ed. (ABE), GED preparation, business English/ math/ presentation skills, general remediation, or any combination of these needs. This learning may be accomplished in a classroom with a teacher, through self-paced individualized

study, through contextual learning geared toward the targeted occupation, or through computer-based instruction (indicate what specialized software will be used.) It may also be accomplished through the establishment of cooperative arrangements between the training program and a local Adult Ed. program, where participants may be shared, schedules coordinated and services exchanged. (Documentation of this type of arrangement should be provided.)

4) The Job Search and Placement component applies the techniques learned to finding an actual job. Programs should describe what means they will use to help their target population succeed in accessing unsubsidized employment. Once the participant enters the job search phase, continued job readiness seminars (as well as continued remediation, training and personal development opportunities) should still be offered 5 days/ week. *Be sure to describe all aspects of the Job Search curriculum thoroughly.* Participants would still be required to attend for 30 hours/ week and would be excused from attendance only when they have specific job search activities or interviews scheduled. Programs must also describe how they will monitor and document participants' job search efforts.

5) Post-Employment Services begin as soon as the participant begins working in an unsubsidized position and end when the participant is discontinued from TFA assistance or at the conclusion of the contract period. It includes not only maintaining ongoing employment for a longer period of time (or seeking new employment if the original position is lost), but also working to continually upgrade the employment through increased skills, hours and wages. Any participants who begin work in a position that is less than 30 hours/ week **must continue to attend** the program for the remaining hours (up to a max. of 35 total) to continue their training/ remediation and increase their employability. Any participants who lose their jobs during the initial six month period would need to resume their search efforts on a more intensive basis, to regain employment as soon as possible, after meeting with staff to analyze what went wrong and how it could be prevented in the future.

Programs should *clearly describe* the **job retention strategies** they plan to use and how they will keep working participants successful on-the-job and in pursuing life-long learning activities. In addition to having program staff doing regular follow-up with working participants, those working full-time would transition into structured job retention activities to the degree that their schedules allow. At a minimum, Support Groups should be offered at varying times (including evenings or weekends) to allow an opportunity for all working TFA recipients to participate. These (as well as individual meetings) are an effective means of offering proactive assistance to participants in handling problems or barriers as they arise before they impact on their employment. The Support Group would focus on retention and job upgrading issues, utilize guest speakers on topics of interest to newly employed participants, and offer a chance for participants to discuss situations they have encountered (and solutions they have found) with both their peers and a qualified staff facilitator. A structured mentoring program (either through their work place or through volunteers from the community) is another method that has proven effective in improving job retention.

C. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS: Proposers must *clearly describe* each of the above components that will be included within their program design (and clearly delineate the costs in the budget).

In the proposal, be sure to include complete information regarding:

1) Curriculum & Approach: All programs must be geared toward the specific needs of the target population they have described in Section 2. The description of the program curriculum should convincingly address ways of overcoming the barriers described for this population, and the approach (including times and places where the program will be offered, staff, etc.) should be demonstrated as suitable to their needs. A full curriculum outline must be provided for *all* program components (including optional ones.)

2) Goals: Specify the goals that the program aims to achieve for its participants. All programs will be required to keep their participants in compliance with the previously described Federal Participation Rates and program performance benchmarks and goals. Program outcomes should reflect a measurable improvement over the participants' current employment situations. Programs should define (backed up by employer documentation) the types of jobs as well as the starting weekly wage which their participants can expect to achieve at the completion of training. **Vocational education programs must aim for at least 50% of their placements to be full-time (preferably with benefits) and to result in earnings that exceed the Federal Poverty Level (by the end of the program year.)** All programs should provide sufficient post-employment training opportunities, if needed, to assure a 10% increase in earnings, as well as retention, during the first 6 months of employment.

D. Schedule: On a *week by week basis*, lay out a schedule that demonstrates how all the proposed components would fit together, what options would be available to participants at what point in the program, how the curriculum will be delivered and how the mandated 30 hours/ week of participation met over the course of an individual's participation in the program. For components that may include more than one stage in the participation, the schedule and curriculum layout must be clearly described for each stage (e.g., the courses and topics to be included during training, job search, post-employment services, etc.) Since referrals tend to come a few at a time on an irregular basis, indicate how the schedule has been arranged into modules and how often new participants could be added. Demonstrate how flexibility and non-traditional evening or weekend hours could be a part of the schedule, when needed.

Section 5. PROGRAM STAFF (10 points):

Ongoing case management begins from the time the CTWorks Case Manager meets with participants to assess their needs and establish a plan for resolving barriers to employment (including referral to programs which best meet employment-related or support service needs.) Case Managers track participants' participation throughout their time receiving Jobs First Employment Services to assure that they remain involved in suitable activities at the mandated number of hours and continue to receive appropriate services. From the time participants first report to a Training provider with a completed Employment Services Referral Activity Record until they are terminated from the program, **in addition to training and placement**, responsibility for day-to-day monitoring is assumed *by program staff*. Program staff will carefully monitor the progress of each participant through all phases of the program, providing the first line attempt at resolving barriers related to continued participation in the program and attainment of the program's goals. Program staff will report progress back to the central Case Manager on a regular basis and consult with them as needed, especially when larger problems arise, when non-compliance is evident or when an outside referral is needed. **In the proposal**, describe:

A) **Staff Qualifications:** Identify (by title, not name), **all staff positions which are included in the Budget**, what aspects of the program each is responsible for, and what *qualifications* (experience or training) they would require to be effective in carrying out these responsibilities. (Qualifications should more closely resemble job descriptions, not the resumes of individuals currently in the positions, but they should be geared towards the needs of the program.)

B) Describe the **approach & techniques** staff will use in preparing participants for unsubsidized employment, tracking their individual progress through the program and assisting them in overcoming their barriers to employment. Describe what information will be maintained in the file, what would be important to report back to the Case Manager, and how staff would coordinate services with the Case Manager.

C) Describe the role that program staff will play in guiding participants through each phase or component of their training, placement and post-employment services. How will they motivate and empower participants to resolve their own problems, increase their earnings and succeed in their efforts to become free of TFA dependence?

Section 6. EMPLOYER SUPPORT LETTERS (15 points):

Programs depend on employers to hire their participants and give them a chance to make a successful labor market attachment. Strong employer involvement with programs also helps to assure programs are more responsive to the employers' needs. The most successful programs have employers involved in many phases of the program, including curriculum development, instructor or guest speaker roles, conducting practice interviews, allowing participants to tour facilities, providing donations in the form of funds/ space/ equipment/ supplies, and, of course, providing work experience or employment opportunities.

There are many levels of support that employers may be willing to offer. They may choose to become involved in one or more of the above suggested roles, or in some other *tangible* way. They may have had positive experiences with your programs in the past which makes them willing to give consideration to candidates that you may present to them in the future.

Attach to the proposal: You must document this partnership by providing **letters from employers** specifying the extent of their involvement with **this program** and especially their willingness to **hire the targeted population for positions they expect to have available in our region** within the next year or so. **NOTE: Letters must be originals, on the employer's letterhead, and dated on or after March 1, 2010.** They must be submitted **by the proposal deadline** (**late letters will no longer be accepted.**) [Faxed letters will be accepted temporarily, up to the proposal deadline, but the original must be obtained and submitted within 5 business days of the fax date.]

The *quality of commitment* demonstrated by the letters will be a major consideration in the rating process, as well as whether the quantity of employers willing to hire seems sufficient for the number of participants planned. Undocumented assertions of employer involvement will receive no points, and letters that clearly refer to *different programs* will receive no consideration. Letters of general support for the agency and its mission will carry little weight. Letters should specify the *types and number of jobs* employers expect to have available, the starting salary (or range) that would be offered to new employees with little or no previous experience in the field, and the fact that employers have some awareness of who the target population consists of. If work experience or subsidized work is a part of the program design, *evidence* that there are sufficient slots available to accommodate all the participants which the program plans to serve must also be documented through letters.

Section 7. COST EFFECTIVENESS & BUDGET (10 points):

Describe how your program plans to operate cost effectively in providing training, placement and retention services to Jobs First Employment Services participants. Describe any additional funds you will be able to leverage in providing these services or any innovations you have incorporated that will allow the program to serve as many participants as possible with limited funding. (Include a description of leveraged funds in the Budget Narrative.)

In the Budget, itemize *all expenses* you will incur in the operation of this program. The JFES Budget has classified line item expenses under: A. Program Operation Costs, B. Participant Wage Subsidies for a Subsidized Work/ Work Experience component (if included.)

Section 8. BUDGET NARRATIVE: Provide a detailed narrative for all line item expenses listed on the Budget.

Provide a detailed budget narrative for expenses listed on the Jobs First Employment Services Budget Form, showing the *calculations* used to determine the total for each line item. When completing this section, note the following:

(A) The narrative for staff salaries must show the *number of hours* to be charged to the grant, the *hourly wage* and the *total wage* to be paid for *each job title*. Example: Instructor - 100 hours @ \$15 per hr. = \$1500

(B) All portions of the fringe rate must be clearly identified and the breakdown of the calculations clearly shown.

Example: Staff Fringe = \$7,401 (38%)

FICA @ 7.6% = \$1,480.20

Pension @ 5.1% = \$993.29

Unemployment Compensation @ 3.4% = \$662.20

Short Term Disability@ 4.9% = \$954.34

Health Insurance @ 14.9% = \$2,901.97

Long Term Disability@ 2.1% = \$409

(C) For many line items, such as travel, the purpose and need should be explained, as well as the calculations. Rent could include the number of square feet and the rate per square foot.

(D) **Liability insurance covering participants is now required for all programs**; it should be a part of every budget. The WorkPlace, Inc. must be included as an "additional insured".

(E) Leveraged Funds: Any funds or services being leveraged from other sources in support of this contract may be indicated in the Budget Narrative. (Keep them separate from the funds being requested.) Identify the source, amount and use of these funds.

- Additional contract forms will be required of selected service providers after the grant awards have been made.

PROPOSAL TITLE PAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Organization, Mailing Address, Contact Person and Telephone: Provide the name of your organization, your *complete* mailing address (including street address, city, state & zip code) and the name of a person who can be contacted *for further information* regarding this proposal (not necessarily the contract signatory.) The telephone number should be that of the contact person (include area code.)

Operation Site(s): Provide the address of the location(s) where the program components will be offered. For the convenience of participants, training sites should be within the labor market area where participants reside at a location readily accessible by public transportation. If the site is not among the Proposer's established locations, a ***letter of agreement*** must be attached indicating that the owner/ occupant would make the site available for use by the program should funding be approved.

Type (Field) of Training: Indicate the type of training or occupational field the program is targeting. Some programs (such as vouchers) may be looking to offer a wide range of options, but some of the key ones to be targeted can be indicated. (e.g., Various, including...)

Type of Vocational Education & Additional (Optional) Component: Since this RFP is soliciting vocational education (occupational skills training) programs only, the offering must be categorized into ***one*** (and only one) of the three available choices. The Optional Component may or may not be included. Complete definitions of these choices and their requirements are included in the Program Design section of the RFP.

Program Performance Goals:

List the *numeric* goals for your program at each of the following stages *for each component*:

Total Participants (This represents **100%** of the participants who receive any services from the program):

Jobs First Employment Services recipients referred with an Employment Services REFERRAL Activity Record and who report to the program for even one day are *enrolled* in the component to which they were referred. In conjunction with the primary training component, some of the participants may also be enrolled in a Subsidized Work Component (if included.) If so, estimate the number of participants (and percent *of the total enrollment*) planned to participate in this component.

Successful Completions (minimum **80%** of the Participants enrolled in each component):

a) Occupational Skills - The number of participants who will either complete the occupational skills training and begin Job Search or another countable component, OR enter training-related unsubsidized employment directly from the occupational skills training. Since not all participants who begin the program will complete it (and all who show up for the first day count as enrollments), it is best not to overestimate this goal.

b) Subsidized Employment/ Work Experience - The number of participants who will successfully complete at least 8 weeks in a *single* paid work assignment and return to Job Search full time, or transition directly into an unsubsidized placement.

Placements (minimum **70%** of Participants who are unemployed at time of program entry): Placements into full-time unsubsidized employment in the field of training will be the primary expected outcome of the training. All who begin working in any unsubsidized employment after enrollment into the program at minimum wage or higher *for any number of hours* will be counted as placements. Those who are employed when they start the program will not count as placements, even if they are placed into another job. (They will count toward the retention benchmarks, starting from the time of program entry.) Since it is unknown how many of the enrolled participants will be unemployed when they begin the program, this goal must remain as a percentage, rather than an absolute number.

90 Day Employment Retention (minimum 70% of Employed Participants): The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment (whether new placements or those who were employed at the time of program entry) who retain their employment for 90 calendar days during the time they are receiving services from the program (prior to the end of the contract period.)

6 Month Employment Retention (minimum 40% of Employed Participants): The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment (whether new placements or those who are employed at the time of program entry) who retain their employment for 6 months during the time they are receiving services from the program (prior to the end of the contract period.)

Wage at or above the TFA Payment Standard (minimum of 80% of Employed Participants): The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment (whether new placements or those who are employed at the time of program entry) who achieve earnings prior to the end of the contract period at or above the TFA Payment Standard for a family of three (plus \$90) which currently equals \$633 per month.

Wage at or above the Federal Poverty Level (minimum of 50% of Employed Participants): The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment (whether new placements, carryovers or those who are employed at the time of program entry) who achieve earnings prior to the end of the contract period at or above the Federal Poverty Level for a family of three (currently \$16,090/ year – or \$309/ week, as of April 2010). Programs which enroll some underemployed participants and aim to upgrade their employment status should show at least a 10% increase in income by the end of the retention period.

Amount of Funding Request: Enter the amount of funds you are requesting to operate this program. Separate Program Costs (A), Administrative Costs, (B) funds to be used to pay or partially subsidize the wages of participants in a Subsidized Work/ Work Experience component (C.) Participant Wage Subsidies. The amounts listed here must match the amounts in the Budget. See "Available Funds" for information regarding amounts available through this RFP. Also include an accurate calculation of the Cost per Participant.

Signature: This proposal must be signed by an individual having the authority to enter into a contract on behalf of your organization. As the future contract signatory, the individual must not be debarred from receiving federal funds (see RFP instructions regarding Debarment.) Include the printed name of the signatory, his/her title & the date the proposal was signed.

**WORKPLACE, INC. PY2010/2011 JOBS FIRST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) - PROPOSAL TITLE PAGE** (See Instructions)

ORGANIZATION: _____
 MAILING ADDRESS: _____
 CONTACT PERSON: _____ TELEPHONE: _____
 OPERATION SITE(S): _____

TYPE (FIELD) OF TRAINING: _____

Location of Training: Bridgeport Stamford Norwalk Valley (Ansonia/Derby)

Type of Vocational Education to be provided (check one): 1. Classroom Occupational Skills Training
 2. Subsidized Employment 3. Training Vouchers
 4. On-the-Job [OJT] or Customized Training 5. Classroom Occupational Skills Training with Adult-ED

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE GOALS	A. Vocational Education Component		B. Subsidized Work Component (if included)	
	Number of Participants	Percent	Number of Participants	Percent
1. Total Participants		100%		
2. Successful Completions				
3. Job Search/ Placement/ Retention Component Goals:			Required Outcomes:	
a) Placements into Unsubsidized Employment	min. 70% of those unemployed at entry			
b) 90 Day Retention	min. 70% of those in unsubsidized employment			
c) 6 Month Retention	min. 40% of those in unsubsidized employment			
d) Wages > TFA Payment Standard	min. 80% of those in unsubsidized employment			
e) Wages > Federal Poverty Level	min. 50% of those in unsubsidized employment			

AMOUNT OF FUNDING REQUEST (amounts must match Budget):

A. Program Costs		C. Participant Wage Subsidies	
B. Admin. (No Admin Allowed)		D. Total Request	

TYPE OF CONTRACT: Cost Reimbursement (to contract max.)	Cost per Participant:	
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TYPE OF CONTRACT: *Cost Reimbursement*

Signature of the authorized representative for your organization:

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME: _____

TITLE: _____

DATE SIGNED: _____

The WorkPlace, Inc. JOBS FIRST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES BUDGET

a.	CONTRACTOR:	
b.	BUDGET PERIOD: <i>July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011</i>	
c.	ACTIVITY:	
	(1) Budget Line Items	(2)* Budget Totals
A.	PROGRAM COSTS:	
1	Staff Salaries	
2	Staff Fringe	
3	Travel	
4	Rent / Utilities	
5	Equipment - Lease / Maintenance / Purchase	
6	Other Direct Costs	
	a. Supplies - Office / Postage / Other	
	b. Telephone	
	c. Staff Training	
	d. Conferences / Meetings	
	e. Marketing / Printing	
	f. Participant Supplies / Training Needs / Support	
7	Insurance & Bonding	
8	Contractual (Outsourced)	
9	Sub-Total Program Costs	
B.	ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS:	
1	Staff Salaries	
2	Staff Fringe	
3	Travel	
4	Rent / Utilities	
5	Equipment - Lease / Maintenance / Purchase	
6	Other Direct Costs	
	a. Supplies - Office / Postage / Other	
	b. Telephone	
	c. Staff Training	
	d. Conferences / Meetings	
	e. Marketing / Printing	
	f. Audit / Legal	
7	Insurance & Bonding	
8	Contractual (Outsourced)	
9	Sub-Total (of A9)	
C.	Participant Wage Subsidies	
D.	TOTAL AMOUNT: (A9 + B9 + C)	

(2)* Provide a Budget Narrative to explain how the Line Item Totals were arrived at.

What is southwest's current breakdown for JFES participants?

Currently the SW regions breakdowns as follows:

Average monthly active caseload: 1,200

Monthly counter: 0-12 = 658 or 54.8%

13-21 = 542 or 45.2%

No high School diploma: 312 or 26%

Limited work history: 264 or 22%

Basic skills deficient: 384 or 32%

ATTACHMENT C

MEMORANDUM (from State of Connecticut Department of Labor)

Date: October 26, 1998

Subject: The Application of Wage Laws on Welfare-to-Work and TANF Recipients

With the implementation of the federal Welfare-to-Work (WtW) and Jobs First Employment Services Programs, it is essential to keep in mind federal and State laws which govern the workplace itself. In particular, operating entities should be aware that Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) clients under federal grant programs are protected by the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Connecticut Wage and Hour Laws when engaged in allowable activities, such as community service or work experience, which constitute employment under these laws. If the activities in which **the participant is engaged do constitute employment, the participant must be paid the minimum rate in wages.** The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) repealed previously-existing federal law provisions which had explicitly permitted Community Work Experience Programs (CWEP) to operate without compensating participants for their services.

Connecticut General Statutes §31-58(h) defines “employ” in a manner similar to the FLSA as “to employ or suffer to work.” Conn. Gen. Stat. §31-58(f) defines “employee,” in part, as **“any individual employed or permitted to work by an employer.”** The statute lists a number of exceptions including domestic service in a private home, babysitting and “activities of an educational, charitable, religious, scientific, historical, literary or nonprofit organization where the employer-employee relationship does not, in fact, exist or where the services rendered to such organizations are on a voluntary basis.”

An “employer” is defined, in Conn. Gen. Stat. §31-58(e), as “any owner or any person, partnership, corporation, limited liability company or association of persons acting directly as, or in behalf of, or in the interest of an employer in relation to employees, including the state and any political subdivision thereof.”

While employment is not subject to the FLSA unless it constitutes an “enterprise engaged in commerce or in the production of goods for commerce” whose annual gross sales exceed \$500,000, an employer whose sales are less than \$500,000 **is still subject to Connecticut’s wage and hour laws.** Further, even employers covered by the FLSA are covered by Connecticut’s wage and hour laws when the state law provisions are more protective.

TRAINEES OR EMPLOYEES

If a TFA client is primarily engaged in on-the-job training, as defined under the FLSA, or volunteer services, the recipient need not be paid minimum wage. However, in order to be considered a trainee, the training must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- the training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to that which would be given in a vocational school.
- the training is for the benefit of the trainees.
- the trainees do not displace regular employees, but work under their close observation.
- the employer providing the training derives no immediate advantage from the trainees’ activities and on occasion the employer’s operations may actually be impeded.
- the trainees are not necessarily entitled to a job at the completion of the training.
- the employer and trainees understand that the trainees are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.

This multi-part standard was referenced in a recent New York district court decision, *Archie V. Grand Central Partnership*, 5 WH Cases 2d 783 (3/19/98), in which the court determined that participants in a work program could not be classified as trainees but were actually employees for purposes of the FLSA and should have been compensated in accordance with the Act. In this particular program, the participants were assigned to maintenance (sweeping, mopping, painting, repairing and cleaning), food service, administration (answering the telephone, filing, making intra-office deliveries, maintaining lists, dispensing mail, and recording information), outreach, or recycling duties, all of which directly or indirectly contributed to the operation and goals of the enterprise sponsoring the program. The outreach and recycling aspects of the operation generated revenues for the operation. Although participants in the program were required to work forty hours per week for 700 hours, some participants worked more than the required number of hours. The court noted in this case that, while the program provided the participants with “some meaningful benefits” such as basic job skills and the ability to create an employment history, the participants did not receive training which was similar to that which the participants could receive in a vocational school and the employer derived a definite, immediate benefit from the participants’ services. Moreover, the court found that the participants often performed the same duties as the employer’s staff, only with less compensation, and that the participants expected compensation for their work. The court noted that the “test of employment under [the FLSA] is one of ‘economic reality’” *Archie*, 4 WH Cases 2d at 806. In determining the “economic reality” of an employment relationship, the court ruled that one should look to whether there was an expectation or contemplation of compensation and whether the employer received an immediate advantage from any work done by the individuals.

EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS/CONNECTICUT’S “ABC” TEST

Connecticut’s Wage and Workplace Standards Division., which has adopted the FLSA’s six-part standard pertaining to training, also looks to Conn. Gen. Stat. §31-222(a)(1)(B)(ii), which has been labeled the “ABC” test, in determining the existence of an employer-employee relationship. Pursuant to the ABC test, any service provided by an individual must be considered covered employment unless “(I) such individual has been and will continue to be free from control and direction in connection with the performance of such service, both under his contract for the performance of service and in fact; and (II) such service is performed either outside the usual course of business for which the service is performed or is performed outside of all the places of business of the enterprise for which the service is performed, and (III) such individual is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, profession or business of the same nature as that involved in the service performed....” Unless an individual’s services fall within all of these categories, his services would constitute covered employment.

The key element in the “ABC” test is the control that the employer has over the TFA client. Control by the “employer” is essential in an employer/employee relationship and would not customarily be found in a situation where the participant’s services should be categorized as volunteer services. In determining whether a participant’s services are volunteer services which need not be compensated in accordance with the minimum wage requirements, it is crucial to ascertain whether the participant had a clear expectation of compensation for his or her services, whether the services provided by the participant are customarily performed on a volunteer basis, and whether the “employer” was in the position to exercise any control over the participant’s activities. For example, if the employer is in a position to discipline or discharge the participant for policy violations, such an element of control may be indicative of an employer/employee relationship. Other examples of the employer’s retention of control over a participant, whether or not such control has ever been exercised by the employer, are:

- a continuing relationship between the employer and participant.
- the establishment of set hours of work by the employer.
- a requirement by the employer that the participant work on the employer’s premises.
- a requirement by the employer that the participant perform his or her services in the order or sequence set by the employer.
- the furnishing of tools, materials and/or equipment to the participant by the employer to enable the participant to perform the services.

All of these elements may not be present in a specific employment relationship, but these examples represent the kinds of factors considered by state and federal taxing agencies when determining whether employment exists.

Work experience and community service programs frequently involve activities such as maintenance or janitorial work, clerical services and food services. Services provided by participants in such programs should be characterized as employment and participants must be paid the minimum wage unless the services are part of a program which constitutes a training program as outlined above (“Trainees or Employees”). Such services can be characterized as volunteer services if the participant had no clear expectation of compensation and the “employer” has no substantive control over the participant’s activities.

This memorandum is intended to provide some guidance in the development of contracts with employers pursuant to the WtW and TANF federal grants. As the employer is the party who would ultimately be liable for wage and hour violations if it fails to pay an employee minimum wage, it is imperative that the Regional Boards apprise any employer with whom they are contracting of its responsibilities under the wage and hour laws.

Attached to this memo is an informal checklist to assist you on this subject. Any questions pertaining to this memo may be directed to legal staff in the Department of Labor’s Office of Program Policy at (860) 263-6755. If you have any questions as to whether specific activities are compensable employment, please write to the Department’s Wage and Workplace Standards Division, 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, Connecticut, 06109.

CHECKLIST

Pertaining to training:

Is the training (even if it includes actual operation of the employer’s facilities) similar to that which would be given in a vocational school?

Is the training for the benefit of the trainees (participants) or students?

Will the participants displace regular employees?

Are the participants closely supervised?

Does the employer derive any immediate advantage from the participants’ or students’ activities?

Are the employer’s operations even impeded on occasion by the training activities?

Are the participants or students entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training program?

Do the employer and participants understand that the participants are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training?

Pertaining to a volunteer:

Does the participant have a clear understanding that he or she will not be receiving compensation for his or her services?

Can the employer exercise control over the participants’ services?

Are the services provided by the participants traditionally provided by other volunteers?

TANF Work Activities – Explanatory Guidance and Definitions

The purpose of this document is to provide explanatory and interpretive guidance regarding TANF countable work activities under the delivery of Jobs First Employment Services for TFA recipients consistent with the requirements of the federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 requires states to document that a certain percentage of recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds are employed or are engaged in work-related activities for an average number of hours per week. Only certain types of work-related activities count, and there are restriction and or limits as how some activities may be counted.

Participation Rates

During federal fiscal year 2006 Connecticut must demonstrate that it has 50% of all TANF families working or engaged in an allowable and countable work-related activity for a minimum average of 30 hours per week.

Although Connecticut is still required to submit quarterly reports to HHS on work participation rates for two-parent families, it is not necessary to make special provisions for serving these customers. Essentially, two-parent individuals should be treated as single-parent customers with regard to enabling the household to become and remain independent from cash assistance within 21 months.

Efforts should be focused on attaining the TANF All Families Participation Rate for FFY 2002, which is 50% of all single parent families engaged in countable TANF activities for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Certain individuals are considered to meet the minimum federal TANF participation requirement when engaged in activities for less than 30 hours per week. These circumstances include:

- a. single custodial parents with a child under the age of six are determined to meet participation requirements at the rate of an average 20 hours per week in any combination of threshold and/or incremental activities;
- b. teen heads of households or married teen parents who have not completed high school and who are enrolled in a high school or alternative high school diploma program, or a General Equivalency Diploma program, irrespective of the number of hours of participation;
- c. teen heads of households or married teen parents who have completed high school or the equivalent and who are enrolled in education directly related to employment for a minimum average of 20 hours per week;

Allowable Activities

The final rule published by the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) does not provide definitions of TANF work activities, affording states the flexibility to define them. The definitions contained herein are those adopted by the Connecticut Department of Labor for the purpose of implementation of Public Act 97-2.

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 specifies twelve work, training, and education activities in which individuals may participate in order to be "engaged in work" for the purpose of counting toward the work participation rate requirements. These are the "allowable activities." The legislation also establishes conditions for when certain activities count toward participation, places limitations on certain activities, and provides exceptions for certain categories of recipients of TANF.

Allowable work activities are divided into two groups. A minimum of 20 hours per week must be spent on activities from the first group of activities. Participation in activities from the second group only counts after 20 hours of participation in the first group of activities.

ACTIVITIES COUNTING TOWARDS 20 HOUR MINIMUM (AND BEYOND)	ACTIVITIES COUNTING AFTER 20 HOUR MINIMUM IS MET
1. Unsubsidized Employment	
2. Subsidized Private Sector Employment	
3. Subsidized Public Sector Employment	
4. Paid Work Experience	
5. On-the-Job Training	
6. Job Search/Job Readiness	
7. Vocational Education Training	
8. Community Service	
9. Providing Child Care for Others Doing Community Service	
	10. Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment
	11. Education Directly Related to Employment
	12. High School Completion/GED

First Group of Activities (Counts Towards 20 Hour Threshold):

Unsubsidized Employment - Work in which wages are paid solely by the employer without public sector subsidy. Includes self-employment.

Subsidized Private Sector Employment - Work in the for-profit or private not-for-profit sector of the economy in which wages are paid for by the employer and another entity, usually through state or federal government assistance. Includes work study and stipends.

Subsidized Public Sector Employment - Work in the government sector of the economy, that is, federal, state or local governmental organizations, in which wages are paid for by the employer and another entity, usually through state or federal government assistance. Includes work-study and stipend programs.

Paid Work Experience - Time-limited, paid (at least the State's minimum wage), supervised work activity in the public or private sector which is intended to improve the employability of individuals.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) - Paid and supervised work activity in the public or private sector in which the worker receives training that provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of a specific job.

Job Search and Job Readiness - Supervised group and individual job search activity. May include:

- classroom instruction in job search techniques, completing job applications, interviewing, resumes;
- life skills training, orientation to the world of work, motivational exercises, family budgeting, etc.;
- job placement and job development;
- job seekers support groups (job clubs).

Vocational Education Training - Formal occupational skills training conducted in a classroom setting, in a workplace setting, or in some combination of the two.

Community Service - Volunteer activity in community-based programs, the primary goal of which is community enhancement as opposed to improving the employability of individuals.

Child Care for Others Doing Community Service - Provision of child care services for an individual performing community service regardless of whether that person is a TFA recipient. Care for a dependent child by the second adult in a two-parent TFA household does not count.

Second Group of Activities (Counts After 20 Hour Threshold is Met):

Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment - Any suitable occupational or vocational training leading to employment.

Education Directly Related to Employment, in the case of recipients without a high school diploma or GED - Preparatory programs in ABE, GED and ESL when not a part of a vocational educational program.

Exception: For married and single teen parent heads of household without a high school diploma or GED, the first 20 hours of participation meets the work participation rate.

High School / GED - Participation in a high school or GED program in the case of recipients who have not completed high school.

Exception: For married or single teen parent heads of household without a high school diploma or GED, satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or the equivalent meets the all families work participation rate.

Limitations on Counting Activities

1. Individuals participating in job search or job readiness activities may only be counted toward participation for a maximum of 6 weeks in any fiscal year. An individual's participation in job search and job readiness assistance does not count for a week that immediately follows four consecutive week of such participation in a fiscal year. Not more than once for any individual in a fiscal year may a state count three or four days of job search and job readiness assistance during a week as a full week of participation.
2. Effective 10/1/01, enrollments in vocational education (occupational skill training) only count toward participation for a maximum of 12 months in the lifetime of a participant. Also, no more than 30% of the TANF participation rate numerator may be comprised of individuals participating in vocational education. Included in this category are married single-parent heads of household under the age of 20 who are participating in high school completion or education directly related to employment.

Calculation of Monthly Participation Rate for All Families

A state's annual participation rate is the average of the rates for each of the 12 months during a federal fiscal year. A simplified explanation of the rate calculation from a *CT Works* perspective would be as follows.

Numerator: Number of families receiving assistance that include an adult or minor head of household who is participating in work activities for the required number of hours.
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Divided by:

Denominator: Number of families that include an adult or minor head of household receiving assistance; minus the number of families sanctioned in that month for failure to participate in work activities (Note: sanction reduction limited to 3 months in preceding 12 month period).

Reduction of Participation Rate Due to Net Caseload Reduction

A state may receive a pro rata reduction of its TANF participation rate goal for a current fiscal year in accordance with the percentage by which its assistance caseload in the preceding federal fiscal year was below FY 1995 levels (the former Title IV-A, AFDC caseload). The reduction may not be attributed to changes in a state's eligibility criteria.

Potential Penalties for Failing to Attain TANF Participation Rates

Failure to attain the TANF participation rates (adjusted for caseload reduction) without good cause may result in a base penalty that reduces the State Family Assistance Grant (SFAG) by 5%,

For each subsequent year, the base penalty (5%) is increased by two percentage points, up to a maximum of 21%.

The penalty percentages may be reduced if the state achieved a participation rate equal to a threshold level of 50% of the minimum rate minus any caseload reduction credits.

A penalty of between 1% and 5% may be imposed if a state's failure to achieve the minimum participation rates is attributed to a failure to impose penalties against individuals who do not engage in work activities without good cause.

Failure demonstrate attainment of participation rate goals increases the percentage a state must contribute as its minimum basic Maintenance of Effort increases from 75% to 80%.

**DIRECTIONS TO Jobs First Employment Services RFP
BIDDERS' CONFERENCE (Tuesday, April 27, 2010, 10:00 A.M.)**
350 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604

I-95 (CT Turnpike north or south) - Exit 27A for Rt. 25 and 8. Bear to the right and take Exit 2 (Golden Hill and Main Street). At the end of the exit, turn right onto Lafayette. The WorkPlace, Inc. is located at the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Lafayette (pink building on your right). Turn *left* onto Fairfield Avenue for main entrance to the parking garage.

Merritt Parkway (Rt. 15) - (traveling north) - Exit 49S for Rt. 25 South/ (traveling south) - exit 52 for Rt. 25 South. Follow the signs for Bridgeport. Take Exit 3 (Washington Avenue and Main Street). On the exit take the left fork for Main Street South. Continue under viaduct and straight onto Main Street. On Main Street, go to the fourth traffic light and turn right onto Fairfield Avenue. The WorkPlace, Inc. is located at the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Lafayette Square. Parking garage is before the intersection on Fairfield Avenue.

Routes 8 and 25 - south - Exit 3 (Washington Avenue and Main Street). On the exit take the left fork for Main Street South. Continue under viaduct and straight onto Main Street. On Main Street go to the fourth traffic light and turn right onto Fairfield Avenue. The WorkPlace, Inc. is located at the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Lafayette Square. Parking garage is before the intersection on Fairfield Avenue.

PARKING - You may park in the Fairfield Avenue Parking Corporation garage located across the street from our offices. Main entrance is on Fairfield Avenue. **We do NOT validate parking.** Metered street parking is also available.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE: Enter through the front door, facing Fairfield Avenue. Sign in with the guard to visit The WorkPlace, Inc., Proceed to elevators on the Left. The Conference is being held on the **3rd floor** in **Conference Room A.**