



2019 REQUEST FOR QUOTES (RFQ)
for
Southwest Connecticut American Job Centers
Website Design and Development

RELEASE DATE:	Friday, February 22, 2019
BIDDERS' CONFERENCE:	2:00 p.m. EST Wednesday, March 6, 2019
SUBMISSION DEADLINE:	4:00 p.m. EST Monday, April 8, 2019

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Under the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), P.L. 113-128, the Governor of the State of Connecticut has designated The WorkPlace to serve as Southwestern Connecticut’s Workforce Development Board (WDB) responsible for coordinating job training, employment, and educational services in the Southwestern Connecticut region which is composed of 20 municipalities¹.

The WorkPlace and its partners provide a comprehensive, integrated workforce development system that utilizes local American Job Centers (AJCs) as the primary vehicles for delivering workforce services to the public. Funding for these services is available under WIOA, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on July 22, 2014 and replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1988. The AJC system is a partnership of organizations, working as a team, to promote a universal approach to providing effective workforce assistance to job seekers and businesses. This collaboration of state, regional and local organization is designed to provide a seamless delivery system of programs and services.

Comprehensive and Affiliate AJC’s are located throughout the state and offer walk-in and other job seeker resources ranging from employment workshops and résumé assistance for job seekers to recruitment services and tax credit programs for employers. Centers also provide Labor Market Information, an electronic job bank and specialized veterans’ services. Whether a person is unemployed, looking for a different job, or interested in getting back into the labor market, American Job Center services are available to anyone, regardless of employment status.

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

SECTION II – GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Purpose

The WorkPlace is requesting quotes for the design, development and hosting of a new website for the Southwest American Job Center (SW AJC). The purpose of the website is to promote the services offered through the SW AJC. The site will be hosted by the successful bidder, or other reliable host provider recommended by the bidder, with a content management system able to accessed and utilized by WorkPlace and partner staff.

Upon completion of development of the site all content, coding, and graphics will become the sole property of The WorkPlace.

B. Period of Performance

Upon selection of a bidder, The WorkPlace will enter into contract to begin work. The contract shall begin in the 2nd Quarter of the 2019 year (April, May, or June).

C. Eligible Bidders

All public or private not-for-profit corporations, local education agencies, governmental units, public agencies, or private-for-profit corporations properly organized in accordance with State and Federal law and in business for at least 1 year may submit a proposal for funding. Minority and women-owned and operated businesses are encouraged to submit a proposal.

Each bidder is advised that The WorkPlace shall hold the selected bidder accountable for effectively and efficiently managing and delivering the project described in this RFQ.

D. Ineligible Bidders

A vendor would not be considered if it:

- It is currently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation by an action of any governmental agency;
- It owes delinquent Federal and/or State taxes;
- It owes delinquent Unemployment Insurance taxes;
- It has existing contracts with any governmental entity that are suspended or otherwise not in good standing;
- It had previous contracts with any governmental entity terminated for cause;
- It has not complied with an official order of any government agency to repay disallowed costs incurred during its conduct of projects or services.

The WorkPlace, in its discretion, may determine there is good and just cause not to consider the submitted quote.

SECTION III – SCOPE OF SERVICES – AJCSWCT.com

The WorkPlace is seeking proposals from organizations to design, build, and launch an innovative, user-friendly website to engage jobseekers and employers as well as enhance their experience with the SW AJC website, AJCSWCT.com. The objective of the website is to create a dynamic tool that provides constant access to educational and employment resources.

The WorkPlace has identified the following essential components and features that must be included in the project design:

A. Design

1. User-friendly design that provides a consistent user experience.
2. The text, graphics, and overall layout of the website must be visually appealing and engaging.
3. Website information architecture, graphic look and feel, user navigation, homepage and main navigation templates for each of the main navigation links.
4. Utilize existing logo, but not design elements from current site. Also, convert existing content to new website and incorporate all additional content specified by The WorkPlace.
5. Each section of the site should have a common look and feel. The use of photographs, fonts and layouts should be consistent throughout the site.
6. The website must be easy to navigate. Information should be grouped and presented in a logical manner and require no more than three levels of “drill down” for the user to find the desired information.
7. The website must meet all federally mandated access requirements adopted by the Federal Access Board under section 508 subsection 1194.22 of the Rehabilitation Act.

B. Functionality

1. Standard system navigation, including search capabilities using key words or phrasing that will identify content contained throughout the site.
2. Development of web pages to accommodate the proposed navigation scheme.
3. Support interactive calendar of events offered through each SW AJC location.
4. Support registration/enrollment processes for workshops offered through each SW AJC location.
5. Ability to complete forms on website with information captured in database.
6. Ability to collect and aggregate social media feed activity.
7. Content management system using the WordPress platform that will permit non-technical staff to instantly update website content on specific pages.

8. Software and licenses necessary to maintain site internally or externally, as decided by The WorkPlace.
9. Provide training and all necessary support to permit easy use by staff.

C. Administrative Requirements

1. Multiple security levels for staff.
2. Compatibility with multiple browsers.
3. Compatibility with all HTML-enabled mobile devices.
4. Email addresses, email message design, event calendar, system defaults.
5. Administrator accounts allowing staff to create customer accounts, create privilege groups, change group settings, archive records and restore records.
6. Ability to collect and aggregate social media feed activity.
7. Content management system using the WordPress platform that will permit non-technical staff to instantly update website content on specific pages.
8. Software and licenses necessary to maintain site internally or externally, as decided by The WorkPlace.
9. Ability to collect and aggregate system usage reports and analytics.
10. Website must not require plug-ins as a default.
11. Allow for customized keywords and metatags for each page and subpage

D. Additional Requirements

1. The selected bidder must assign a project manager that will be made available to present information and coordinate with WorkPlace staff, including a reasonable number of meetings to present design and development solutions.
2. All aspects of the design and development must be approved by The WorkPlace. The website will be subject to testing on all applicable platforms prior to launch.
3. Upon completion and approval of the website design, the website and all of its contents, software and architecture become property of The WorkPlace.

SECTION IV – SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

A. Bidder’s Conference

The WorkPlace will conduct a bidders’ conference on Wednesday, March 6, 2019, from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm EST.

Dial-in Number: 1-866-499-3427

Conference Code: 4322601125

During the bidders' conference, The WorkPlace staff will answer questions regarding this RFQ, thus it is important that bidders *thoroughly* read the entire RFQ prior to the bidders’ conference. All interested bidders are strongly encouraged to call into the conference as *The WorkPlace staff will not be allowed to answer questions about the RFQ after the bidders’ conference* (unless the questions pertain specifically to the technical aspects of the RFQ or the RFQ format).

All bidders are asked to **RSVP your intention to participate on the call to Melanie Blanco at mblanco@workplace.org or (203) 610-8562**. Questions regarding the RFQ may be made, **in writing**, to mblanco@workplace.org prior to the day of the bidders’ conference. The WorkPlace will publish the questions and answers following the call.

B. Submission Format and Requirements

Interested vendors must submit the information listed below to be considered. All information must be provided and complete to receive consideration. In place of a cover letter, complete the enclosed Cover Sheet with the response to this RFQ.

Submissions must contain the following sections in the order indicated:

4. **Cover Sheet (Attachment A)**

5. **Proposal Narrative**

- a. Provide a company profile, length of time in business, core competencies/ areas of focus, and the number of full-time staff you employ
- b. Summary of the bidder’s background and description of relevant experience. Please include:
 - i. List five websites your company has produced that best reflect your work and relevancy to this project. Briefly list the role your company played in each project. The URL should be submitted. Only live sites will qualify during evaluation.
 - ii. Three references, including the name of the reference, contact information, brief description of work performed and date of the completed project.

- c. Describe the structure of the team that will be assigned to this project and the role of each individual. Provide biographies of key individuals involved in the project.
- d. Estimate the percentage of your web staff that will contribute to the project relative to your entire staff (using full time equivalents). For example, if you will use five web designers and developers on the project and you have ten staff total, the percentage would be 50%.
- e. Describe your company's project management process.
- f. Provide the details of any applicable hardware/software vendor partnerships.
- g. State your testing and support plan.

6. Budget Form (Attachment B)

- a. The budget must encompass all design, production, and software acquisitions necessary for development of the website as well as content management training to staff of The WorkPlace. Costs for hosting the site for one year from the date of initiation should be detailed as a separate line item.

Submissions must be emailed as a PDF file. The document should be formatted with 12-point font, one-inch margins and double-spaced text. Submissions should not exceed 10 pages in length, including the cover sheet, proposal narrative and budget form. No extraneous documents or attachments should be submitted.

The WorkPlace reserves the right to reject nonconforming submissions without review.

C. Timeline

The mandatory criteria must be met and include: Five (5) hard copies of your proposal and one (1) soft copy on a flash drive.

Deliver proposals to the attention of:

The WorkPlace
Attention: Millie Brighindi
RFQ – American Job Center Website Design and Development
350 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

The deadline for all submissions is **Monday, April 8, 2019 at 4:00 PM (EST)**. **Late submissions will NOT be accepted.**

D. Selection Criteria

Selection will be based upon:

- 1. **Quality of Submission:** the quality of the response, as evidenced, for example, by the completeness and responsiveness to the requested information, clarity, readability and

thoroughness of the statement. There must be a demonstrated understanding of the project's objectives and goals.

2. **Project Design:** extent to which submission meets the needs of The WorkPlace and demonstrates the ability to successfully complete the objectives of this RFQ.
3. **Cost Effectiveness:** the demonstrated ability to complete the entirety of the project scope at a reasonable and competitive cost.
4. **Record of Past Performance:** evidence of prior experience with similar projects.

E. Contract Award

A contract may be awarded based on submissions received, without discussion of such submissions with the bidders. Each offer should, therefore, be submitted in the most favorable terms, from a price and technical standpoint. The WorkPlace reserves the right to request additional data, oral discussion or presentation in support of original submission. Final award of a contract shall be contingent upon:

- Successful negotiation of a contract;
- Acceptance by the bidder of the contract terms and conditions;
- Satisfactory verification of past performance and systems (e.g., financial), where applicable; and
- Availability of funding.

F. Contract Negotiation

The amount approved by The WorkPlace will be a maximum funding level. The WorkPlace staff will meet with the selected bidder to finalize funding and project design. Staff will notify the selected bidder of any modifications that are required to their original submission to ensure that it meets the required contract format. The selected bidders are expected to comply with all requested revisions in a timely manner so that the contract may be executed without delay. Only after authorized representatives of the selected bidder and The WorkPlace have signed the contract may any payments be made.

SECTION V – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

A. Conditions of this RFQ

- This RFQ does not commit or obligate The WorkPlace to award a contract, to commit any funds identified in this RFQ document, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or presentation of a response to this RFQ, to pay for any costs incurred in advance of the execution of a contract, or to procure or contract for services or supplies.
- By submission of a response, the bidder certifies as to its legally constituted status, and that 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 bidder 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 bidder, and shall not be disclosed by the bidder, prior to award directly or indirectly to any other bidder or to any competition; and
 - No attempt has been made by the bidder to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.
- Selection of a bidder shall be conducted in accordance with The WorkPlace, federal and state procurement provisions. The WorkPlace may choose not to fund a bidder who has the proposal with either the lowest cost or the highest score.
- All contract awards are subject to the availability of federal and/or state funds and the execution of a contract acceptable to The WorkPlace and the selected bidder. If awarded a contract under this RFQ, the selected bidder must abide by funding restrictions found in Section 2005 (a) (other than paragraph (6)) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1397d(a)).
- **Drug Free and Smoke Free Workplace:** Bidders should note that if awarded a contract under this RFQ, 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, sexual orientation, 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.
- **Certification Regarding Lobbying:** If awarded a contract under this RFQ, the selected bidder must certify as to compliance with Title 45 CFR Part 93.

- **Assurances:** If awarded a contract under this RFQ, the selected bidder must complete Standard Form 424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs, prescribed by OMB Circular A-102.
- The WorkPlace may perform contract compliance, programmatic and financial monitoring in connection with all provisions of this RFQ.
- Selected bidder must be in compliance with Connecticut State Ethics Reform provisions.

B. Proprietary Information

Submissions in response to this RFQ shall 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 § 1-210 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.

C. Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion

Federal regulations require workforce boards to determine if a bidder 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 the selected bidder. The selected bidder 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.**

RFQ for Southwest American Job Center Website Design and Development

COVER PAGE

Vendor Information		
Name		
Address		
Federal EIN #		
U.I. #		
DUNS #		
Contact Person	Name	
	Title	
	Telephone #	
	Fax #	
	Email	
<p><i>Please provide a brief description of your organization.</i></p>		

Project Quote
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Signature of Authorized Representative

Date

Name and Title of Authorized Representative