



Jobs First Employment Program (JFES)

2019 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

for

Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services & Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners

RELEASE DATE: Thursday, April 25, 2019

LETTER OF INTENT: 3 p.m. EST
Friday, May 3, 2019

BIDDER'S CONFERENCE: Tuesday, May 7, 2019
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

Call in information will be provided to organizations that submit a letter of intent.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 12:00 p.m. (Noon) EST
Tuesday, May 28, 2019

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

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INTRODUCTION

The WorkPlace, Southwestern Connecticut's Workforce Development Board, is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that coordinates job training, employment, and educational services in the Southwestern Connecticut region, which is compressed of twenty (20) municipalities¹ and contains four Service Delivery Areas (SDA's). It develops partnerships with local community leaders, elected officials, business, labor, and education leaders to create a competitive economic environment through workforce development. The WorkPlace is the local administrative entity for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) Program.

Through this RFP, The WorkPlace is soliciting competitive proposals from qualified organizations to provide **Occupational Skills Training with adult education services and Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners** opportunities responsive to the needs of JFES participants living in the Southwestern Connecticut (SWCT) Service Delivery Area (SDA) – Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford and The Valley. The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to identify providers that can design and deliver innovative and comprehensive programs that will result in JFES participants earning an industry-recognized credential and obtaining full-time employment. In addition, retention tactics organizations will use to keep participants successful in pursuing lifelong accomplishments.

Understanding the elements of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and the JFES programs, in addition to understanding the unique needs of the program participants, is vital to operating a successful program.

JFES is designed to rapidly move (within 21 months) recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) into employment and toward self-sufficiency. The Balanced Work First approach is used to create individualized employment plans with immediate goals taking into account barriers and other factors. The goals of the JFES program 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 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.

All TFA recipients who are subject to the time limits have to participate in JFES. Additionally, individuals disqualified from the program but whose children are still eligible are required to participate and to make a good faith effort to find a job and go to work as soon as possible.

TANF is one of the United States of America's federal assistance programs. It began on July 1, 1997, and succeeded the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, providing cash assistance to indigent American families with dependent children through the United States

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

Department of Health and Human Services. TANF was established as a result of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act passed in 1996. The Act provides temporary financial assistance while aiming to get people off of that assistance, primarily through employment. On Feb. 8, 2006 President George W. Bush signed the Deficit Reduction Act, which reauthorized TANF.

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Administrative Requirements

Selected bidders shall work cooperatively with The WorkPlace and its partners, including any Federal, State or Public/Private Foundations. They shall also comply with any guidelines concerning case management issued by The WorkPlace and/or Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL). Compliance can affect a training vendor's program as simple as financial regulations and policies and procedures. Understanding the impact of Compliance can enhance, create new opportunities for the JFES participants.

Selected bidders shall maintain the confidentiality of all information regarding participants and their families.

At minimum, selected bidders shall submit monthly progress and data reports in accordance with reporting requirements established by The WorkPlace. Reports must be submitted by the tenth (10th) day of the month for the previous month's activities. The templates for reports are designed by The WorkPlace and submitted to vendors after the selection process is completed.

B. Estimated Available Funds

Approximately **\$400,000** is available to provide the services described in this RFP. **(Note: all contracts will be subject to final funding allocations from the CTDOL and at the discretion of The WorkPlace) Please note there is a cap of \$3,000 per participant for Performance Funds reimbursement.**

On average there are approximately 1,000 time-limited TFA recipients, each month, residing in the Southwestern Connecticut Southwest Service Delivery Area. It is imperative that programs be innovative in their program design and bidders demonstrate how they will provide the most cost effective services in the areas where they are most needed. **Leveraging additional funds, while not required, would certainly make a program more desirable.**

Profit will not be allowed as a line item in the budget. Program costs will be paid based on actual, demonstrable costs up to the full amount of the contract.

These contracts will be 80% Cost Reimbursement and 20% Performance based.

C. Period of Performance

Any contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall commence on July 1, 2019 and end on June 30, 2020. Services under this contract should be available throughout the program year and approved programs will be expected to start and accept referrals as soon as possible after July 1, 2019.

The WorkPlace, in its discretion, may elect to extend any and/or all contracts awarded as a result of this RFP for an additional term of one year but not exceed twenty four months.

D. 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 one (1) year may submit a proposal for funding. Minority and women-owned and operated businesses are encouraged to submit a proposal.

Per 2 CFR §25.200, all proposers are required to:

1. Be registered with the System of Award Management (SAM) prior to the submission of a proposal.
2. Maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which a proposal is under consideration or, if selected, at all times during the contract period.
3. Provide its unique entity identification in the proposal.

Organizations can partner with other eligible entities to develop and deliver a responsive program as long as one of the entities is clearly identified as the lead entity and fiduciary. Where such arrangements exist, the proposal must include a **Letter of Agreement** clearly articulating the roles and responsibilities of each party. Proposals from individuals will not be accepted.

Each bidder is advised that The WorkPlace shall hold the selected bidders responsible and accountable for effectively and efficiently managing and delivering the services and activities described in this RFP while achieving the contracted services.

E. Ineligible Bidders

An organization shall 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 agency of the State of Connecticut or the USDOL 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 proposal.

SECTION II – PROGRAM DESIGN

A. Background

The JFES funding available under this RFP is targeted to providing comprehensive *Occupational Skills Training with adult education & Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners (ELL)* (including placement and retention) for time-limited TFA cash recipients in the Southwestern Connecticut SDA.

Programs must be developed to assist participants in reaching program goals that will keep them in compliance with participation mandates. Programs are encouraged to have available a variety of components that will assist participants in overcoming barriers to employment while participating in programs, 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 including the following components:

- job readiness (including occupational preparation and remediation 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 JFES participants referred to them, **including** the unemployed, the underemployed, and those who have limited English proficiency. **Guiding Principles** for all JFES 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.

The current benchmarks for Southwest SDA caseload are as follows:

Benchmarks	Number of Participants
Average Monthly Active Caseload	557
Monthly Counter	0-12 = 402 or 53%
	13-21= 194 or 26%
	22-33= 148 or 20% <i>(participants in counters higher than 21 months were granted extensions by DSS)</i>
No High School Diploma	280 or 38%
Limited Work History	425 or 54%
*Basic Skills Deficient	389 or 28%
Percent of Cases Basic Skills Deficient	70%
Language Barrier	222 or 28%

**An individual is considered basic skills deficient if the individual (a) scores below 236 on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) appraisal; or (b) has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.*

- *The average CASAS scores for Reading - 215*
- *The average CASAS scores for Math - 202*

Federal Work Participation Rates

Participants in **all** JFES activities, including Occupational Skills Training, Job Readiness, Job Search/ Placement, and Unsubsidized Employment, must meet the Federally-mandated work participation rates. All programs funded for Program Year 2019/20 (starting on or after July 1, 2019) 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

- ***Occupational skills training:*** (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) Out of the 788 JFES clients served in the PY18/19, three clients have met

their Vocational Educational lifetime limit.

- **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
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** through arrangements with employers willing to hire first and provide training
- **Unsubsidized Employment:** at least 20 hours/ week plus educational activities, for a total of 35 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

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 (35 hours per week total) during the course of their program participation.

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

Please note that "Orientation" and other forms of assessment are **not** allowed as separate activities. If included, this assessment process must be part of job readiness. Participants will be referred by their case manager to report on the first day of the training program start date. The participant attendance will *count* from the day they report. Service must be continuous and uninterrupted from that day.

Referrals

For the purposes of this RFP, the selected Vendors will not be responsible for recruitment. Program referrals will be coordinated by the Case Management entity.

Programs are required to serve *time limited JFES* participants referred to them by the American Job Center (AJC) Case Management Staff. These JFES participants are referred to the JFES programs by their Department of Social Service worker.

- Programs must be able to start up *immediately* at the beginning of the program year (as soon as possible after July 1, 2019) and/ or to accept referrals until the end of the year (June 2020).

Selected vendors will complete a training order referral form which outlines the process for referrals.

Note: JFES providers, in general, **do not have selection rights** but may have discussions with Case Managers regarding referrals they feel do not meet their established entry criteria. Selected bidders

must serve eligible time-limited TFA recipients who meet the articulated entry criteria and report with a completed referral. Referred participants become *enrolled on the first day they report* to the program. Vendors are required to begin day-to-day tracking upon enrollment. Programs are not responsible for referred participants who never report; however, programs must notify the case manager *immediately* regarding participants who do not report to the program. **Funded programs must work with eligible participants through placement, retention, as well as, providing a holistic continuum of services that participants will need to reach all JFES goals.**

B. Description of Services Sought

1. Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services

Occupational skills training for a minimum of 20 hours combined with 10 hours dedicated adult educational advancement services resulting in both occupational skills and educational skill attainment. A national or state recognized credential an entry or promotion into industries that have been demonstrated to be in demand by employers. This proposal seeks National or State recognized credential for:

- IT
- Service
- Customer Service
- Entry Level

A successful program will have both the occupational and educational training on site and have both the occupational and educational training components delivered simultaneously. The curriculum should be designed jointly by a certified adult education instructor and specialists in the technical training field. Ideally, classes should also be co-taught by adult education and technical training instructors. The educational advancement services should be contextualized and taught from an employment perspective. To be successful with the current JFES design and 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 (Currently for a family of three (\$21,330/ year – or \$410/ week).

This proposal is seeking Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services in the following prior areas:

- Information Technology
- Service Industry
- Customer Service
- Entry level Healthcare
- Additional Industry must be supported with LMI information

2. Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners

Programs that provide Occupational Skills Training to JFES clients with limited English proficiency will be considered. These programs should be designed to increase the employment options and earnings potential for participants who are not good candidates for traditional occupational skills training or higher education. In order to meet the federal TANF Work Participation Requirement (WPR), programs in this option must be designed to include 20 hours of Occupational Skills Training supplemented by at least 10 hours of language skills remediation weekly. This will give participants the opportunity to learn a new occupational skill, upgrade their language skills and increase their options to obtaining unsubsidized employment.

SECTION III – PERFORMANCE MEASURES

For each of the respective categories of service, the selected bidders must satisfy the performance measures listed below.

A. Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services

1. **Total Participants is defined by:** 100% of the participants who receive Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services

JFES 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.

2. **Successful Completions is defined by:** minimum of 80% of the enrolled participants completing the training program and gaining a credential and/or employment

The number of participants who will complete the occupational skills training and attain a credential 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.

3. **Placements is defined by:** 70% of participants that transition into new or upgraded unsubsidized employment as a result of the program.

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.

B. Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners

1. **Total Participants is defined by:** 100% of the participants who receive Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners

JFES 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.

2. **Successful Completions is defined by:** minimum of 80% of the enrolled participants

The number of participants who will complete the occupational skills training and attain a credential 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.

3. **Placements is defined by:** minimum of 70% of participants that transition into new or upgraded unsubsidized employment as a result of the program.

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.

4. Retention Goals is defined by:

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, post-employment services 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. JFES Case Managers focus on retention and job upgrading issues, utilizing 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.

SECTION IV – PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

A. Organizational Information

Provide a description of your organization's philosophy, background, and qualifications in providing the *type of program* that you are proposing to serve this targeted 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.

B. Target Populations (10 points)

Proposed services should be designed to meet the needs of active TFA recipients with barriers that fall in one of the following four subgroups:

1. No H.S. diploma, limited work history and no credentials
2. H.S. diploma, and basic skills deficient
3. H.S. diploma and not basic skills deficient
4. Have limited English proficiency

In the Proposal:

Identify the *specific subgroup(s)* within the JFES population that you plan to target for service in your program. For *each* of the target groups, provide current data or other documentation to support the number of people anticipated to need the program's services; describe clearly how the proposed program design will assist the target population in overcoming their barriers to accessing and retaining initial placement into unsubsidized employment, and moving towards full-time employment with earnings at or above the Federal Poverty Level.

C. Program Selection (20 Points)

Creative, cost-effective approaches to providing *occupational skills training*, combined with either contextualized adult basic education or *occupational skills training* for English Language Learners are needed throughout the Southwest region.

Describe how the program will integrate ABE and/or ESL. Describe the tools and curriculum will be used. Provide a sample of a 20 hour week

In the Proposal:

- Specify which program option you are proposing and explain your rationale for choosing this option
- Describe how your proposed program will address client's barriers to attaining a certification or obtaining employment?

- Specify whether experience is required for placement in the industry and how your proposed program will address that.
- Describe your process for reengaging clients who do not achieve the desired outcome upon testing for their certification or credential.
- Describe what strategies you will use to ensure that the proposed program is interactive and engaging and will keep clients motivated.
- Describe your approach to working with the Case management Entity
- How will technology be utilized to deliver or support customer

D. Industry Focus (10 points)

The goal of JFES is for TFA recipients to obtain and retain employment in jobs that pay at or above the Federal Poverty Level. Successful proposals will offer programs that will equip TFA recipients with credentials to be able to compete for in-demand jobs in high growth industries that pay enough for them to become and remain self-sufficient.

This proposal prioritizes the IT and service industries. If you are not bidding on these tracks please justify your selection with LMI and employment support. Additionally, provide responses to the following questions:

- How will this training prepare customers to attain a recognized credential and employment at a or above the living wage?
- What additional support will be made to ensure to customer can obtain the nationally recognized credential?
- Are there any restrictions for customers to obtain the nationally recognized credential (i.e., CASAS score, background check, physical limitations)?

In the Proposal:

- Identify the in-demand industry and the specific occupations the proposed program will prepare individuals for. Include in your response, the career ladders and lattices generally associated with these occupations.
- Analyze and document the factors demonstrating that the type of program and proposed number of placements are aligned with the current southwestern SDA labor market, including the number of job openings available and required skill sets

Note: With the addition of our Health Career Academy, bidders must make a compelling case to secure funding to train for occupations in the Health Care industry that are provided by the Health Career Academy. For updated information on training offered by Health Career Academy click on this: <https://www.workplace.org/healthcare-careers>

E. Case Coordination (10 Points)

The WorkPlace does not provide direct Case Management services. Rather, it subcontracts with the American Job Center operator for the direct provision of Case Management services to

participants who are registered for JFES at the AJC offices. JFES participants are given an Employment Assessment to identify skills, aptitudes, strengths, interests and/or barriers. Every JFES participant has a Case Manager assigned specifically to address their employment service needs. Case Managers are responsible for developing a participant's Employment Plan (EP) based on the aforementioned assessment, to integrate and individualize services and activities aligned with the JFES program goals and operating principles. In addition, they are responsible for arrangement and coordination of continuous and connected services for the participant. Selected vendors will be responsible for identifying staff to coordinate training referrals with the JFES Case Management entity to ensure client success.

In the proposal:

Describe how case coordination will be conducted. Describe what tools and methods will be utilized to create case management. Describe how issues with case management be resolved with the case management entity/vendor.

F. Curriculum and Program Design (40 Points)

For each program that a bidder is proposing to serve, the bidder must, provide a detailed curriculum outline including all of the following components:

1. Occupational Skills Training

Occupational Skills Training programs 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. Life and Employability Skills

This component of the proposed curriculum must include 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 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 Language Learners (ELL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED preparation, business English/ math/ presentation skills, general remediation, or any combination of these needs. It may also be accomplished through the establishment of cooperative arrangements between the training program and a local adult education program, where participants may be shared, schedules coordinated and services exchanged. (Written documentation of this type of arrangement should be provided.)

4. Job Search and Placement

This component of the proposed curriculum must provide techniques required to find a 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

This component refers to 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. 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 job search efforts on a more intensive basis, to regain employment as soon as possible, after meeting with their JFES case manager 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 JFES participants working successfully 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, post-employment services 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 JFES case managers should 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.

In the proposal:

- Clearly describe each of the above components that will be included in the proposed program design:
- Describe your program design with specificity in the following:

a. Curriculum & Approach

All programs must be geared toward the specific needs of the target population and 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.

b. Goals

Specify the goals that the program aims to achieve for its participants. All programs will be required to keep 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 participant's 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. **Vendors must aim for at least 50% of their placements to be full-time (preferably with benefits). 100% 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.

c. Schedule

On a *weekly basis*, design 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 meet over the course of an individual's participation in the program. For components that may include more than one cohort 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.

G. Program Staff (5 Points)

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 monthly 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:

- Identify (by title, not name), all staff positions designated to the proposed program, what

aspects of the program each are 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.)

- 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.
- 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?

H. Cost Effectiveness (5 Points)

All services delivered under this proposal will be subject to a fixed per participant cost structure. Fixed cost payments will be as follows:

- **Cost Reimbursement:** 80% of total program costs payable upon verification of actual expenditures
- **Performance Based Reimbursement:** 20% of total program costs payable upon verification of attainment of Nationally Recognized Certification or Placement into unsubsidized competitive employment. Please note that there is a cap of \$3,000 per participant.

In the proposal:

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 resources 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. (Include a description of leveraged funds in the Budget Narrative.)

SECTION V – SUBMISSION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

A. Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent to Bid must be emailed to Paula Breeden at pbreeden@workplace.org no later than 3 p.m. EST by Friday, May 3, 2019. Said letter does not commit bidder to submit a proposal. The Letter of Intent must contain the company name, address, contact person, and contact information.

All of the Letters of Intent to Bid will be kept confidential and will be released upon written request and only after a selection has been made.

B. Bidders' Conference

The WorkPlace shall conduct a Bidder's Conference Call on Tuesday, May 7, 2019 from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm EST.

Call in information will be provided to those who submit a letter of intent.

During the bidders' conference call, The WorkPlace staff will answer questions regarding this RFP, thus it is imperative that potential bidders read the RFP thoroughly prior to the bidders' conference. All interested proposers are strongly encouraged to call into the conference as *The WorkPlace staff will not be allowed to answer questions about the RFP after the conference* call (unless the questions pertain specifically to the technical aspects of the RFP or the RFP format). All proposers are asked to **thoroughly READ THE ENTIRE RFP PRIOR TO THE CONFERENCE CALL.**

Questions regarding the RFP may be made, **in writing**, to Paula Breeden, Program Manager, email pbreeden@workplace.org prior to the Bidder's Conference Call. The WorkPlace will publish all questions and answers.

C. Submission Instructions

To be considered for funding under this RFP, bidders must submit their proposals by **mail or hand delivery**.

Bidders must submit **one (1) original proposal and four (4) copies of the proposal along with a USB flash drive which contains an electronic copy of the proposal and any attachments in MS Office Word 2007 or a higher version.** All proposals must be submitted to:

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

All proposals must comply with the following guidelines:

- 8½ x 11 letter size paper
- One inch margins

- No smaller than 12 point font
- Numbered pages
- Single-sided printing
- Unbound (no staples or other binding)
- Proposal attachments must be formatted and saved in Microsoft Word.
- Bidders may NOT submit extraneous material such as brochures or newspaper articles.
- Bidders may NOT bind proposals in any way. All extraneous materials (including cover letter) and/or any bindings will be removed prior to the rating process.
- Proposals must be sequenced in accordance with the instructions provided in this RFP.
- Bidders must use affirmative language (shall, will) as appropriate so that proposals can be converted easily to contract form.

D. Proposal Format

Proposals must be prepared and sequenced in accordance with the instructions given in this part. **Proposals received after the submission deadline will be returned to the bidder.** Timely delivery of proposals to The WorkPlace is the sole responsibility of the bidder.

When complete, the proposals must contain the following sections in the order indicated:

1. **Proposal Title Page** (Attachment A)
2. **Proposal Narrative**
3. **Budget Form** (Attachment B)

E. Deadline for Submission of Completed Proposal

JFES
Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services &
Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners
proposals are due by:

Tuesday, May 28, 2019, at 12:00 p.m. (noon) EST

Proposals must be mailed or hand delivered.
 Hand delivered proposals will be date and time stamped. No fax proposals will be accepted.
THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE.

SECTION VI – REVIEW PROCESS

A. Screening and Evaluation

The award of a contract for any services under this RFP is contingent upon:

1. Favorable evaluation of the proposal in relation to other proposals;
2. Approval of the proposal by The WorkPlace Board of Directors; and
3. Successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal.

An initial screening of all proposals will be conducted by staff of The WorkPlace 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 bidder.**

If the proposal meets the requirements of the screening process, it will then be evaluated by The WorkPlace Proposal Review Team using a point system based on a Proposal Evaluation/ Rating Form. Proposals will be scored (in accordance with the schedule which follows) and recommendations made to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of The WorkPlace which will approve tentative funding. All decisions of the Executive Committee must be ratified by the full Board of Directors at its quarterly meetings.

All prospective bidders are prohibited from contacting any of The WorkPlace's Board members, Board committee members or staff (other than contact persons identified in this RFP), regarding this solicitation to avoid actual conflicts, the appearance of conflicts, or undue influence over the process. Contact with anyone for purposes of influencing the outcome of the procurement process shall result in the disqualification of the prospective bidder.

The WorkPlace maintains a policy that an organization must possess the demonstrated ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed contract prior to the contract being executed. Determinations of demonstrated performance shall take into consideration such matters as to whether the organization has:

- Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain them;
- The ability to meet the RFP design specifications at a reasonable cost, as well as the ability to meet performance goals;
- A satisfactory record of past performance in delivering the proposed services, including demonstrated quality of services and successful outcome rates from past programs;
- The ability to provide services and/or programs that can meet the need identified;
- A satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics and fiscal accountability;
- The necessary organization, accounting and operational controls; and
- The technical skills to perform the work.

B. Proposal Rating Criteria

Proposals will be rated according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
Organizational Information	NA
Target Populations	10
Program Selection	20
Industry Focus	10
Case Coordination	10
Curriculum and Program Design	40
Program Staff	5
Cost Effectiveness	5
Total	100

C. Contract Award

A contract may be awarded based on offers received, without discussion of such offers with the bidders. Each offer should, therefore, be submitted in the most favorable terms, from a price and technical standpoint. However, the review team reserves the right to request additional data, oral discussion or presentation in support of written proposals. 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.

The WorkPlace Board of Directors will take action at its June 2019 meeting. Applicants whose proposals were not funded shall also be notified.

D. Contract Negotiation

The amount approved by The WorkPlace will be a maximum funding level. The WorkPlace staff will meet with selected bidders to finalize funding and project design. Staff will notify selected bidders of any modifications that are required to their original proposal to ensure that it fulfills all Board recommendations and meets the required contract format. 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 bidders and The WorkPlace have signed the contract may any payments be made.

The selected bidder's services will be eighty percent (80%) cost-reimbursement for actual expenditures and twenty percent (20%) for demonstrated performance. Performance will be based on achieving the specified Performance Measures.

SECTION VII – GENERAL CONDITIONS

A. Conditions of this RFP

This RFP does not commit or obligate The WorkPlace to award a contract, to commit any funds identified in this RFP document, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation or presentation of a proposal to this RFP, to pay for any costs incurred in advance of the execution of a contract, or to procure or contract for services or supplies.

The following conditions are applicable to all proposals. The WorkPlace reserves the right to:

- Accept or reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, which it considers not to be in its best interest.
- Change or waive any provisions set forth in this RFP.
- Reject non-conforming proposals without review.
- Waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received.
- Negotiate any and all proposed terms, conditions, costs, staffing level, services/activities mix, and all other specifics.
- Request: a) additional data, b) technical or price revisions, and/or c) oral presentations in support of the written proposal.
- Determine that an arms-length agreement exists between the bidder and any subcontractor or vendors they might choose to use.
- Conduct a pre-award review that may include, but is not limited to, a review of the bidder's record keeping procedures, management systems, accounting and administrative systems, and program materials.
- Use additional or de-obligated grant funds to increase the slot level of successful programs.
- Change specifications and modify the contract as necessary to: a) facilitate compliance with the legislation, regulations and policy directives, b) to manage funding and c) to meet the needs of the customers.
- End contract negotiations if acceptable progress, as determined by The WorkPlace is not being made within a reasonable time frame.

B. General Conditions

- This RFP does not commit The WorkPlace to award a contract to any bidder. The WorkPlace shall not pay any costs incurred by any bidder in the preparation of a proposal. The WorkPlace 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 to do so.
- The WorkPlace is responsible for final review and evaluation of proposals and selection of bidders, and reserves the right not to fund any or all proposals. Proposals must be complete

and must follow the format outlined in the Proposal Instructions. The WorkPlace may incorporate site visits and/or applicant interviews into the proposal review process.

- The award of a contract for any proposed service is contingent upon:
 - Favorable evaluation of the proposal in relation to other proposals;
 - Approval of the proposal by The WorkPlace Board of Directors;
 - Successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal or budget required by the Proposal Review Team.
- The WorkPlace may request additional data or an oral presentation in support of written proposals.
- The WorkPlace may require bidders selected to participate in negotiations and to submit any price, technical or other revisions of their proposal as may result from negotiation.
- The WorkPlace reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of all contracts with selected bidders. 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 and number of personnel, location of service delivery and service levels.
- The WorkPlace also reserves the right to accept any proposal as submitted for contract award, without substantive negotiation of offered terms, services, or costs. Therefore, bidders are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially.
- By submission of a proposal, the proposing organization 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 bidders 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 on the proposal. In addition to the scores obtained through the rating process, The WorkPlace may take into account previous experience the bidder has had in implementing similar projects, as well as the bidder's capability of providing services 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 and the selected bidder. If awarded a contract under this RFP, selected bidders 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 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, sexual orientation, genetics, 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 RFP, selected bidders must certify as to compliance with Title 45 CFR Part 93.
- **Assurances:** If awarded a contract under this RFP, selected bidders must complete Standard Form 424B, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs, prescribed by OMB Circular A-102.
- The WorkPlace shall perform contract compliance, programmatic and financial monitoring in connection with all provisions of this RFP.
- Selected bidder must be in compliance with Connecticut State Ethics Reform provisions.

C. Proprietary Information

Proposals 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.

D. Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion

Federal regulations require WDBs 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 selected bidders. Bidders 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.**

E. Equipment

Health and Human Service (HSS) requires that property/equipment purchased with funds awarded under this grant must be used only for the purposes authorized in the grant and that all property/equipment purchased by a selected bidder with awarded funds shall become the property of The WorkPlace.

The WorkPlace will retain title to all equipment with a value of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more purchased with funds awarded under this grant, and a useful life of at least twelve (12) months. Also, selected bidders are required to receive prior approval from The WorkPlace on all purchases in excess of one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

**JFES 2019 RFP
for
Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services &
Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners**

PROPOSAL TITLE PAGE

Organization	
Mailing Address	
Contact Person	Name: Title: Telephone: Email:

LOCATION OF TRAINING <i>(indicate service areas)</i>	
Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Bridgeport <input type="checkbox"/> Stamford <input type="checkbox"/> Norwalk <input type="checkbox"/> Valley (Ansonia/Derby) <input type="checkbox"/> Region wide
Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners	<input type="checkbox"/> Bridgeport <input type="checkbox"/> Stamford <input type="checkbox"/> Norwalk <input type="checkbox"/> Valley (Ansonia/Derby) <input type="checkbox"/> Region wide

AMOUNT OF REQUEST	
Occupational Skills Training with Adult Education Services	
Occupational Skills Training for English Language Learners	
TOTAL	

Signature Date

Name and Title of Authorized Representative

**BUDGET SUMMARY
COST REIMBURSEMENT ALLOCATION**

a.	Contractor:	
b.	Address:	
c.	Report Period:	
d.	Activity:	
	(1) Budget Line Items	(2) 80% Cost Reimbursement Allocation
A. DIRECT 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/ Internet	
	c. Staff Training	
	d. Conferences/ Meetings	
	e. Marketing/ Printing	
	f. Other:	
7	Insurance & Bonding	
8	Contractual/ Outsourced - identify	
9	Sub-Total Program Costs	
B. PARTICIPANT COSTS		
1	Participant Wages/ Stipends	
2	Participant Taxes/ Fringe	
3	Participant Supplies/ Training Needs Supplies	
4	Participant Travel	
5	Sub-Total Participant Cost	
C. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS		
1	Staff Salaries	
2	Staff Fringe	
3	Other Direct Costs (<i>Supplies, Staff Training, Conferences/Meetings</i>)	
4	Audit/ Legal	
5	Insurance & Bonding	
6	Contractual/ Outsourced - identify	
7	Sub-Total Administrative Costs	
D. TOTAL AMOUNT (A+B+C):		
Signature: _____		
Title: _____		
Date: _____		

Please provide a detailed budget narrative and any budget schedules for each of the above line items.