

The **CareerHub**

»» **A WorkPlace Opportunity.**

2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
for
Occupational Skills Training for In-School and/or Out-of-School Youth

RELEASE DATE: **Thursday, April 1, 2021**

LETTER OF INTENT: **3 p.m. EST**
Thursday, April 8, 2021

BIDDER'S CONFERENCE: **Monday, April 12, 2021**
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: **3:00 p.m. EST**
Monday, May 10, 2021

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 (SWCT) Workforce Development Board (WDB), is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that coordinates job training, employment, and educational services in the SWCT region which is comprised of twenty (20) municipalities¹, which make up the SWCT Service Delivery Area (SDA). It develops partnerships with local community leaders, elected officials, business, labor, and education leaders to create a competitive economic environment through workforce development.

Through this Request for Proposal (RFP), The WorkPlace is soliciting competitive proposals from qualified organizations to provide **Occupational Skills Training to In-School and/or Out-of-School Youth** in the SWCT SDA – Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford, and The Valley. Bidders may propose to serve the entire SDA or specific regions within the SDA. Furthermore, Bidders may propose to provide services to youth in-person, virtually, or through a hybrid approach that includes both in-person and virtual instruction.

WIOA youth programs aim to provide comprehensive performance-based youth development services to prepare youth and young adults with the skills necessary for them to compete in today's global economy. Employers often cite lack of workplace or soft skills as a key deficiency in new employees. Most occupations today require workers to have some postsecondary training in order to advance in a career and earn self-sustaining wages.

The purpose of this RFP is to identify providers that can design and deliver innovative and comprehensive performance-based programs that will result in youth and young adults achieving academic and employment success.

Funding for these services is available under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy². Programs funded under this RFP will primarily serve out-of-school (OSY) with limited funding available for in-school-youth (ISY) services. Eligible OSY are between the ages of 16 and 24 while eligible ISY are between the ages of 14 and 21. **Bidders may apply to provide services to either or both categories of youth (ISY and/or OSY).** Bidders proposing to serve more than one category must specify in detail how their proposal sufficiently addresses the needs of both categories of youth.

Proposals must comply with the performance standards and requirements set out in WIOA as well as federal regulations issued by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) and policy guidance of the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL). A link to the full Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) can be located here:

<https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>.

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-08-19/pdf/2016-15975.pdf>

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

² <https://doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm>

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 under WIOA, by The WorkPlace or Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL).

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.

B. Estimated Available Funds

The total available funding under this RFP is \$800,000. The WorkPlace anticipates issuing multiple contracts across the SWCT region. WIOA mandates that seventy-five percent (75%) of youth funding is used to provide services to Out-of-School youth. As a result, The WorkPlace will award a limited number of contracts for In-School youth services.

Funding for the services provided to youth by a selected bidder may not exceed \$3,000 per youth. Therefore, a bidder that proposes to serve 20 youth, may only request funding in the amount of \$60,000. **Bidders are not limited to the number of youth that they propose to serve.**

Bidders must submit a detailed line-item budget on the attached Budget Form (*Attachment B*). Bidders proposing to serve more than one category must submit a separate budget for each category of service.

Costs included must be actual costs incurred in delivering the proposed services and these funds cannot supplant funds already received by the proposing agency from other programs.

C. Period of Performance

Any contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall commence on July 1, 2021 and end on June 30, 2022. 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.

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 if there is good and just cause not to consider the proposal.

SECTION II – WIOA REQUIREMENTS

A. WIOA Program Design

Section 129(c)(1)(C) of WIOA states that funds allocated to youth service providers shall be used to carry out the following program design:

1. Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant; this assessment shall include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants.
2. Develop service strategies for each participant that are directly linked to performance outcomes and shall identify career pathways that include education and employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services for the participant identified in the objective assessment.
3. Provide:
 - a. Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential;
 - b. Preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities;
 - c. Strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that lead to the attainment of postsecondary credentials;
 - d. Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities; and
 - e. Effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

B. WIOA Program Elements

Per Section 129(c)(2) of the Act, the following fourteen (14) elements **must be included in youth programs**. These services listed must be accessible to participants (based on need) and can be offered through collaborative partnerships utilizing community resources. If a bidder does not directly provide the services listed, it must demonstrate the ability to collaborate with other organizations to provide such services. The bidder has the primary responsibility of ensuring that each participant receives the full continuum of services.

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
2. Alternative secondary school offerings;
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:

- a. summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
 - b. pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - c. internships and job shadowing; and
 - d. on-the-job training opportunities;
4. Occupational skills training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved;
 5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
 6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;
 7. Supportive services;
 8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
 9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
 11. Financial Literacy Education;
 12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training;
 13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration;
 14. Activities that help youth prepare for transition to postsecondary education and training.

C. Career Pathways

WIOA places a strong emphasis on career pathways. WIOA secs. 3(7)(A) through (G) defines career pathways as, “a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

1. Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
2. Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options;
3. Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;

4. Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
5. Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
6. Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and
7. Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.”

D. Required Program Components

The WorkPlace aims to provide youth and young adults with high quality, comprehensive career preparation services that lead to participants securing good paying self-sustaining jobs or enrolling in post-secondary education. Our hope is to help young people achieve to their full potential and influence them to live productive lives and have a positive impact on their community.

With this RFP, The WorkPlace seeks bidders who demonstrate the capacity to deliver services that engages young people through a variety of training delivery methods. This RFP emphasizes work experience. The WorkPlace believes that work-based experiences combined with classroom instruction provides alternative ways for youth to learn and be better prepared to meet employer demands. Evidence suggest that work-based experiences can improve employment earnings and outcomes for young people.³

WIOA requires that not less than 20% of funds allocated to the local area be spent on activities supporting paid and unpaid work experience that have a component academic and occupational education. The educational component may occur concurrently or sequentially with the work experience. Further academic and occupational education may occur inside or outside the work site.

The types of work experience includes the following categories:

1. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
2. Pre-apprenticeship programs;
3. Internships and job shadowing; and
4. On-the-job training (OJT).

The WorkPlace will serve as the employer of record and will cover the wages and provide liability and workers compensation insurance.

³ Kis, V. (2016), “Work-based Learning for Youth at Risk: Getting Employers on Board”, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 150, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5e122a91-en>

NOTE: Summer employment alone will not be funded through contracts awarded under this RFP; summer employment will be funded if it occurs with another program element.

Bidders will work collaboratively with CareerHub Workforce Specialist to identify and connect participants with employer worksites. All training must incorporate work-based experience, bidders are expected to assist with connecting participants to employers for work-based experience and work collaboratively with CareerHub Workforce Specialists to monitor and evaluate the youth's performance on worksites.

E. Participant Eligibility

Funds awarded through this RFP will be used for programs that serve Out-of-School youth between the ages of 16 and 24, and In-School youth between the ages of 14 and 21 years old.

An **out-of-school** is an individual who is:

1. Not attending any school (as defined under State law);
2. Not younger than age 16 or older than age 24; and
3. One or more of the following:
 - a. A school dropout.
 - b. A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter.
 - c. A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is:
 - basic skills deficient; or
 - an English language learner.
 - d. An individual subject to the juvenile or adult justice system.
 - e. A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement.
 - f. An individual who is pregnant or parenting.
 - g. A youth who is an individual with a disability.
 - h. A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

An **in-school youth** is an individual who is:

1. Attending school (as defined by State law);

2. Not younger than age **14** or (unless an individual with a disability who is attending school under State law) older than age **21**;
3. A low-income individual; and
4. One or more of the following:
 - a. Basic skills deficient.
 - b. An English language learner.
 - c. An offender.
 - d. A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement.
 - e. Pregnant or parenting.
 - f. A youth who is an individual with a disability.
 - g. An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure of hold employment.

F. WIOA Performance Measures

All youth served during Program Year 2021-2022 will be measured as part of a comprehensive youth program assessed by the WIOA Common Measures.

A link to the WIOA Common Measures can be located here:

https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_10-16-Change1.pdf.

WIOA Common Measures	Description
Youth Placement in Employment/ Education	Percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the 2 nd quarter after exit
Youth Retention in Employment/ Education	Percentage of youth who are in education or training activities or in subsidized employment during the 4 th quarter after exit
Median Earnings	Median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during the 2 nd quarter after exit
Credential Attainment	Percentage of youth who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma/ GED during participation or within 1 year after exit
Measurable Skill Gains	Percentage of youth who are in an education/ training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skills gains

Vendors will be notified of specific goals when information becomes available.

SECTION III – DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES SOUGHT

A. Occupational Skills Training

The WorkPlace is seeking proposals from qualified organizations to provide occupational skills training to eligible In-School youth between the ages of 14 and 21, and Out-of-School youth between the ages of 16 and 24. The Occupational Skills Training Model is designed to equip youth and young adults with the skills and credential(s) necessary to secure employment in high growth in-demand industries. Programs must include instructional and hands-on training and must prepare participants to earn a nationally recognized credential.

Specifically, the selected bidder shall provide occupational skills training in one or more of the industries identified below. The corresponding credentials is not an exhaustive list. Bidders may propose other nationally recognized credentials so long as they satisfy WIOA’s requirement for credentials.

Industries	Credential/Certification
Advanced Manufacturing	Certified Production Technician
Construction	Asbestos Worker EPA Lead Safety for Renovation, Repair, & Painting
Healthcare	Certified Nurse Aide EMT Phlebotomy Pharmacy Technician
Customer Service	National Retail Foundation
Culinary Arts	ServeSafe Food Manager Certification
IT/ Computer Skills	CompTIA Certified Information Systems Security Professional Microsoft Professional Suite Productivity Certificate
Business	Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) Project Management Professional (PMP) Lean Six Sigma

Bidders may propose training for other occupation(s) if they are in in-demand, high growth industries.

While occupational skills training is the priority of this program, proposals must at minimum include the following services: work-based opportunities, career exploration, leadership and job readiness skills. This program aims to assist participants with achieving academic success and be

prepared to pursue full-time employment and/or post-secondary education that will lead to employment and advancement in an in-demand occupation. Ideal programs will offer educational support concurrently with work readiness training, labor market and employment information, career exploration, college preparation and work-based opportunities.

Proposals must demonstrate that upon completion, youth and young adults will be equipped with the skills and competencies they need to obtain gainful employment or enroll in post-secondary occupational training or credit-bearing, non-developmental college level courses. Programs must be innovative and evidenced based with proven track record of positive outcomes.

The selected bidder is responsible for developing and preparing all course content and materials for the delivery of the program to all cohorts.

The selected bidder must provide the following services:

1. Occupational Skills Training

The selected bidder must:

- a. Provide occupational skills training that will lead to participants earning a postsecondary credential. The WorkPlace is seeking proposals that address one or more of the occupational programs and certifications identified in the chart above.
- b. Provide career exploration and labor market information on the selected industry sector(s) or occupation(s).
- c. Provide a program that is supported by proven successful evidenced based and best practice models.
- d. Offer subject relevant hands-on or project-based learning activities that are integrated with classroom activities.
- e. Assist participants with developing their Career Plan.

Bidders may reference the Employment and Training Association's (ETA) Competency Models when designing their program. ETA has worked with industry experts to develop competency models that identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for workers to perform successfully and advance in a career. Each model has nine (9) tiers and begins with the same foundational competencies in tiers 1 through 3, which represent personal effectiveness, academic competencies and workplace competencies. The higher tiers represent more advanced levels of competencies that are specific to an industry and job position. Information on the ETA's Competency Model can be found at:

http://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/userguide_competency.aspx.

Bidders' program curriculum should address skills included in Tiers 1-3.

2. Career Exploration and Planning

The selected bidder must:

- a. Provide career awareness and exploration activities that expose participants to occupations in the specified industry(ies). Bidders may choose to explore additional occupations as long as they are in in-demand, high growth industry(ies).
- b. Use labor market information to clearly illustrate the skills, education and certification or credentials needed for participants to enter the field of their choice.
- c. Assist each participant in developing a career plan that identifies occupations within an industry, education requirements and opportunities for career advancement.

3. Leadership and Work Readiness Skills

The selected bidder must:

- a. Provide leadership development opportunities that are designed to encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors such as:
 - exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities;
 - community and service-learning projects;
 - peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
 - organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training;
 - training in decision-making, including determining priorities and problem solving.
- b. Provide job seeking preparation skills to help participants secure employment, including at minimum, creating a resume and cover letter, thank you letter, completing a job application, conduction job search and preparing for the interview.

4. Work-based Experience

The selected bidder must:

- a. Work collaboratively with CareerHub Workforce Specialist to connect youth to appropriate work-based opportunities including paid or unpaid internships, job shadowing and On-the-Job training opportunities.
- b. Work collaboratively with CareerHub Specialist to monitor and evaluate participants' performance on work-based assignments including paid and on-the-job training.

5. Recruitment

The selected bidder shall assist with the recruitment of prospective OSY participants. The WorkPlace shall perform all eligibility determinations for youth referred by Contractor.

B. Proposal Narrative

All sections listed below are required and must be addressed in the proposal, following the instructions provided and answering all questions completely.

1. Organizational Experience and Capability (45 Points)

a. Previous Experience and Qualifications

- i. Provide a profile of your organization (including mission and vision statements).
- ii. Provide details of your organization's background and previous experience in performing work similar in size and scope to the services solicited in this section of the RFP. Include information regarding populations served. Emphasize any experience your organization has in working with a broad range of customers, in terms of skills, education and barriers, and how other organizational experience relates to the services sought in this section of the RFP.

b. Financial Management

- i. Describe how your organization arrived at the program costs being proposed.
- ii. What services will be included in the budget for the proposed program and what will be provided for by in-kind contributions and/or public-private partnerships?
- iii. What will be the cost per youth served?
- iv. Describe your planned insurance coverage and attach a certificate of insurance that verifies coverage, if one exists. Note: A "commitment of insurance" from a reputable carrier will be required as a part of the contract process.
- v. Describe your organization's financial management system. Include the following:
 - a. Organizational structure with respect to financial management including job titles and duties;
 - b. Organizational payroll system for staff;
 - c. Organizational payroll system for participants;
 - d. Cash management system;
 - e. Capability to report accrued expenditures to account for goods received and services rendered, and to report expenses separately between administration and program expenses;
 - f. Organization's bonding arrangements for all officers, directors, agents, and/or employees who will be authorized

to receive or deposit funds into project accounts, or issue financial documents, checks, or other payments, including the type of bond, the bonding agent, amount of coverage, the staff covered and the dates of coverage.

NOTE: A copy of the most recent audit must be attached, or your proposal will be deemed non-responsive.

c. *Management*

- i. Describe the staff involved in the project. Provide a job description for each position to be funded by this proposal. What related experience or training are staff expected to have? How will staff be selected for this project? Include resumes of existing staff or job descriptions for staff to be hired.
- ii. List your teacher to youth ratio. The ideal ratio is 1:12 and justification must be provided to exceed this ratio. Provide copies of staff licensure or certificates required to provide proposed training service(s) in the State of Connecticut.
- iii. Include any schedule of professional development provided for staff.
- iv. Describe the organizational structure of this program. If the program is to be a stand-alone or part of a larger organizational platform, please provide an agency organizational chart. Describe the management structure for the proposed program.

2. Service Delivery (55 Points)

a. *General Program Design*

- i. Describe your ability to provide and manage successful, innovative, and high-quality services to the category of youth (in-school and/or out-of-school) that you are proposing to serve.
- ii. Identify the method of delivery you will utilize to instruct the youth: in-person, virtual, or hybrid (i.e., a combination of in-person and virtual instruction). Describe any equipment or technology that will be required to deliver virtual and/or hybrid instruction.
- iii. Identify the evidence-based program model(s) and best practices that will be used to support the proposed services.

b. *Recruitment*

- i. Describe your plan and tools for recruiting prospective youth participants to enroll in the WIOA program. Describe any existing connections or strategies used to engage youth.

c. *Occupational Skills Training*

- i. Describe your program design, curriculum, and any tools that will be used in delivering occupational skills training that will lead to

participants earning recognized post-secondary credential(s) in one of the identified or other in-demand industry sectors or occupations:

- ii. Identify the evidenced based program model(s) and best practices that are used to support the proposed program design.
 - iii. Provide a course syllabus and sample class schedule.
 - iv. Describe some project-based activities that will be integrated with classroom activities to support contextualize learning.
 - v. Describe the extent of your relationship with employers in the industry sector or occupation that you will be providing training.
 - vi. Describe how the training will lead to participants getting work-based experience or employment.
- d. *Leadership and Job Readiness Skills*
- i. Describe, with specificity, the curriculum, duration, delivery methods and activities that will be used to deliver the leadership skills training program, as described in this RFP. Identify any innovative features in your design.
- e. *Connection to Employers*
- i. Describe your employer connections for internships, work readiness and placement opportunities for youth.
 - ii. Describe your connections with employers to assist with work-based opportunities or unsubsidized employment.
- f. *General Program Requirements*
- i. Describe your plan to provide and/or coordinate the delivery of additional required WIOA program elements i.e., activities that help youth prepare for transition to postsecondary education and training, Leadership Development, Entrepreneurial Skills Training. (Please refer to Pages 6 & 7 for the complete list of WIOA Program Elements).
 - ii. Describe the strategies that will be used to keep participants actively engaged in the program. What protocols will be followed to keep participants connected with the program?
 - iii. Describe how services will delivered to participants who need additional time or remediation to successfully complete the training.
 - iv. Describe your connection to support services and resource often needed by youth with barriers such as housing, childcare, domestic violence, and substance abuse.

C. Budget

A detailed budget must be submitted on the attached Budget Form (*Attachment B*).

Costs included must be actual costs incurred in delivering the proposed services, and these funds cannot supplant funds already received by the proposing agency from other programs.

All proposals will be evaluated on the basis of cost-effectiveness in relation to proposed high quality service delivery. To accomplish this, The WorkPlace will conduct an analysis of projected costs during the proposal review process. Bidders are therefore encouraged to submit their best offer for providing the services solicited in this RFP and to thoroughly describe and justify the proposed costs. This analysis will be conducted to ensure that the proposed costs are necessary, fair and reasonable; to determine if the proposed costs are allowable and allocable; to determine if there is duplication of costs with other programs; to ensure that the costs are directly associated with carrying out only the proposed services; and to ensure that the proposed costs will benefit The WorkPlace.

SECTION IV – SUBMISSION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

A. Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent to Bid must be emailed to Cathy Patton, Director of The CareerHub, at cpatton@workplace.org no later than 3 p.m. EST by Thursday, April 8, 2021. 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 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 Monday, April 12, 2021, 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 Cathy Patton, email cpatton@workplace.org prior to the Bidder's Conference Call. The WorkPlace will publish the questions and answers.

C. Submission Instructions

To be considered for funding under this RFP, bidders must submit their proposals by **email** to Cathy Patton, at cpatton@workplace.org, by **Monday, May 10, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. EST.**

Please use the following subject line for your email:

2021 CareerHub Occupational Skills Training RFP

Bidders must attach all proposals and accompanying attachments as both Microsoft Word Documents and PDFs.

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
- Proposal attachments must be formatted and saved in Microsoft Word and as a PDF.
- Bidders may NOT submit extraneous material such as brochures or newspaper articles.
- 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 not be considered.** Timely submission 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**
 - a. Organizational Experience and Capability
 - b. Service Delivery
3. **Budget Form** (Attachment B)

E. Deadline for Submission of Completed Proposal

<p>CareerHub</p> <p>Occupational Skills Training to In-School and/or Out of School Youth proposals are due by:</p> <p>Monday, May 10, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. EST</p> <p>Proposals arriving after this time will not be accepted.</p> <p>THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE.</p>

SECTION V – 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 Experience and Capacity a. <i>Previous Experience and Qualifications (25)</i> b. <i>Financial Management (10)</i> a. <i>Management (10)</i>	45
Service Delivery	55
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 2021 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 sixty percent (90%) cost-reimbursement for actual expenditures and forty percent (10%) for demonstrated performance. Performance will be based on achieving the WIOA Common Performance Measures.

SECTION VI – 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 consider 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 comply 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 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

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).

The CareerHub

»» A WorkPlace Opportunity.

2021 Request for Proposal (RFP)

for

Occupational Skills Training to In-School and/or Out-of-School Youth

PROPOSAL TITLE PAGE

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

FUNDING CATEGORIES

Category	Amount of Request	Service Regions	
Occupational Skills Training to Out-of-School Youth		<input type="checkbox"/> Bridgeport	<input type="checkbox"/> Stamford
		<input type="checkbox"/> Norwalk	<input type="checkbox"/> Valley
		<input type="checkbox"/> SW SDA (<i>all regions</i>)	
Occupational Skills Training to In-School Youth		<input type="checkbox"/> Bridgeport	<input type="checkbox"/> Stamford
		<input type="checkbox"/> Norwalk	<input type="checkbox"/> Valley
		<input type="checkbox"/> SW SDA (<i>all regions</i>)	
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	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 (Supplies, Staff Training, Conferences/Meetings)
	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.