Request for Proposal

The WorkPlace Mobile App and Digital Workforce Front Door

Release Date	October 23, 2026
Bidders Conference Date	November 5, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.
Proposals Due	November 13, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.
Submission Contact	Tom Long at tlong@workplace.org

SECTION I – OVERVIEW

A. Introduction

The WorkPlace serves as the Southwestern Connecticut Regional Workforce Development Board, connecting jobseekers and employers with workforce services, career guidance, training, employment opportunities, and other resources. Through a broad portfolio of programs and partnerships, The WorkPlace serves people with varied needs, backgrounds, ages, abilities, and levels of digital access.

The WorkPlace seeks proposals from qualified technology vendors to design, develop, implement, and support a mobile-first digital workforce front door that makes it easier for people to discover relevant services and take the next step. The solution should complement workplace.org and existing workforce systems—not simply reproduce the website in an app.

The WorkPlace anticipates that a cross-platform solution using a shared codebase will be preferred. Vendors may also propose a fully native approach if they explain the material user benefits, lifecycle implications, and total cost. Proposals may include configurable or existing workforce technology, custom development, or a combination of approaches.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is to identify a partner capable of delivering a secure, accessible, user-friendly mobile experience that helps residents and employers connect with The WorkPlace's services. The solution should:

- Provide a simple entry point organized around user needs rather than internal program names.
- Help users discover jobs, training, programs, events, and relevant workforce resources.
- Connect users to career counselors, referral forms, appointment scheduling, and other appropriate next steps.
- Integrate text messaging and, where appropriate, push notifications to support timely, consent-based communication.
- Work effectively across iOS and Android devices and provide a coherent web experience where proposed.
- Be manageable by authorized WorkPlace staff without requiring developer support for routine content updates.
- Support analytics and continuous improvement while protecting user information.
- Offer a maintainable, scalable solution with transparent initial and ongoing costs.

SECTION II – SCOPE OF WORK

Vendors should propose a complete solution and clearly distinguish standard platform features, configuration, third-party services, and custom development. The WorkPlace is open to recommendations on the best architecture and implementation sequence.

A. Discovery, user research, and experience design

- Conduct a kickoff and requirements-discovery process with WorkPlace leadership, program staff, and other designated stakeholders.
- Recommend a user-centered information architecture and navigation model that helps people identify the right service without needing to know program names.
- Describe how the design will account for young adults, jobseekers with barriers to employment, people with limited digital literacy, employers, and users with disabilities or limited English proficiency.
- Develop wireframes or a clickable prototype for review and user testing before full development.
- Identify assumptions, dependencies, risks, and decisions required from The WorkPlace.

B. Digital workforce front door and core functionality

At minimum, proposals should address the following functions and identify which are included in the proposed base solution:

- Need-based navigation or guided discovery (for example: I need a job; I want training; I need career help; I am a young adult; I am an employer).
- Search or discovery of training opportunities, WorkPlace programs, events, and relevant partner resources, using location and other useful filters where data is available.
- Clear calls to action to request assistance, submit a referral or interest form, contact a counselor, and access relevant existing web resources.
- Event details, registration or sign-up pathways, and calendar options where feasible.
- Saved opportunities, personalized recommendations, or a user dashboard, if supported by the proposed platform.
- Mobile-friendly document or resume upload and related tools, where feasible and justified by user needs.
- Employer-facing pathways for hiring assistance, recruitment services, training support, job posting where feasible, and contact with WorkPlace staff.
- Content management tools that allow authorized WorkPlace staff to update approved content, events, links, and notifications

C. Text messaging and notifications

- Text messaging is an important component of this project and should be addressed in the core proposal. Vendors should describe the proposed messaging architecture, provider(s), integration method, and any separate licenses or fees.
- Two-way SMS capability where appropriate, including replies and routing to staff or a supported workflow.
- User opt-in, consent records, opt-out handling, message preferences, and compliance with applicable laws and carrier requirements.
- Use cases such as referral follow-up, appointment reminders, event reminders, application or enrollment next steps, and targeted service updates.
- Staff tools for composing, scheduling, managing, and reporting on messages, with appropriate access controls.
- Segmentation by user-selected interests or relevant service categories, subject to consent and data availability.
- Optional push notifications and a clear explanation of when push notifications versus SMS should be used.
- Message-volume assumptions, per-message charges, short-code, or long-code costs if applicable, deliverability considerations, and data-retention practices.

D. Cross-platform and technical approach

The WorkPlace prefers proposals that minimize duplicate development and long-term maintenance. Vendors should describe:

- Recommended architecture and whether the proposed app is cross-platform, fully native, a progressive web app (PWA), or a hybrid combination.
- Code reuse across iOS and Android, web components, supported operating systems and devices, and any platform-specific limitations.
- Whether the solution is a configurable existing product, a customized platform, or a bespoke build.
- Hosting, cloud services, APIs, integration approach, environments, backup, monitoring, and disaster recovery.
- Third-party products and dependencies, including licensing, ownership, renewal, and vendor lock-in implications.
- How the proposed architecture supports future enhancements without requiring a complete rebuild.

E. Integrations and data

Vendors must identify required and optional integrations, the data needed from The WorkPlace or third parties, and the party responsible for establishing each connection. Potential integration points may include workplace.org, existing forms and referral workflows, event calendars, appointment scheduling, customer relationship management tools, workforce case-management systems, and state or national job/training resources. The WorkPlace is not representing that Application Programming Interface (APIs) or access to all systems are currently available.

For each proposed integration, identify whether it is available out of the box, requires configuration, requires custom development, or depends on third-party approval or access. Do not assume access to confidential participant records or state systems without written authorization.

F. Accessibility, language, privacy, and security

- Design and testing aligned with applicable accessibility requirements and recognized digital accessibility practices, including screen-reader support, keyboard navigation where relevant, readable contrast, scalable text, and plain language.
- Describe language options available at launch, the process for adding languages, and any translation or localization costs.
- Data minimization, role-based access, secure authentication where needed, encryption in transit and at rest, audit logs, backups, and vulnerability management.
- Clear handling of personally identifiable information, consent, data retention and deletion, incident response, and subcontractor access.
- Disclosure of applicable security standards or independent assessments and any known limitations or exclusions.

G. Testing, launch, training, and ongoing support

Functional, usability, accessibility, security, integration, and device testing, with a documented issue-resolution process.

- App Store and Google Play submission, review, release management, and ownership of developer accounts.
- Launch planning, content migration or setup, staff training, documentation, and post-launch support.
- Maintenance, operating-system updates, security patches, third-party updates, monitoring, help desk response times, service levels, and release cadence.

- An approach for measuring usage and outcomes and using the findings to improve the product.

SECTION III – IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERABLES

Vendors should provide a proposed schedule with milestones, dependencies, WorkPlace responsibilities, and acceptance criteria. At a minimum, the project is expected to include:

- Discovery and requirements summary.
- Solution architecture and integration plan.
- User journeys, wireframes, and clickable prototype for approval.
- Configured or developed application and associated administrative tools.
- SMS and notification configuration and testing.
- Documented integrations, data flows, security controls, and accessibility approach.
- Test plan, test results, and resolution of critical defects before launch.
- Production deployment and app-store submissions, if applicable.
- Staff training, administrator documentation, technical documentation, and support escalation contacts.
- Post-launch review and an agreed initial performance report.

SECTION IV – VENDOR QUALIFICATIONS AND ELIGIBILITY

Eligible respondents may include technology companies, software developers, digital product agencies, workforce technology providers, or teams formed through partnerships. Respondents should demonstrate relevant experience in mobile or cross-platform product delivery, user-centered design, integrations, security, and ongoing support. Experience with workforce development, public services, education, human services, or other complex service-navigation environments is desirable.

Proposals may include subcontractors. Identify each subcontractor's role, responsibilities, and costs. The prime contractor remains accountable for project delivery unless otherwise agreed in writing.

SECTION V – PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Sections

Submit one electronic proposal in PDF format, with any supporting appendices clearly labeled.

- Cover page with company name, address, primary contact, email, phone, and authorized representative.

- Executive summary (maximum 2 pages) describing the proposed approach, differentiators, and estimated total cost.
- Company qualifications and relevant project examples (maximum 2 pages), including live links or demonstrations where available.
- Proposed solutions and technical approach, including architecture, cross-platform strategy, SMS, integrations, security, accessibility, and data ownership.
- User experience and implementation plan, including discovery, prototyping, testing, launch, milestones, staffing, and WorkPlace responsibilities.
- Maintenance and support plan, including service levels, update practices, and ongoing product management.
- Measurement and reporting plan, including proposed adoption, engagement, and service-navigation measures.
- Detailed pricing response using the Budget and Cost Proposal template provided, including assumptions, exclusions, optional items, and third-party charges.
- At least three client references for comparable work, preferably including mobile apps, workforce or public-service tools, or SMS-enabled digital services.
- Disclosure of material subcontractors, conflicts of interest, litigation, or security incidents relevant to the proposed services, and any exceptions to the RFP.

B. Pricing and Cost Proposal

Vendors must provide a transparent itemized price and identify all assumptions. Pricing must distinguish one-time costs from recurring and usage-based costs.

The budget narrative must explain the basis of each cost, what is included and excluded, assumptions about user and message volumes, any minimum contract terms, and the cost of services required from other vendors. Identify any implementation or recurring fees that could increase with usage.

Vendors should state whether pricing is fixed-fee, time-and-materials, subscription, usage-based, or a combination. Identify proposed payment milestones and any annual price increases. Proposals must include a completed Budget and Cost Proposal associated with this RFP and provided under the Request for Proposal section of the workplace.org website.

SECTION VI -BIDDERS CONFERENCE

The WorkPlace shall conduct a Bidder's Conference Call on Thursday, November 5, 2026, 2:00 pm EST.

Zoom Call- In Details

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89350591205?pwd=WrN85ozgcV74cfZYYyEzA4nxgW8w1P.1

Meeting ID: 893 5059 1205
Passcode: 515772

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 join the zoom conference via the link provided as The WorkPlace staff will not be allowed to answer questions about the RFP after the conference call.

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 Tom Long, email tlong@workplace.org up until the Bidders Conference. All questions and answers will be published on November 9th.

SECTION VII – SUBMISSION REVIEW AND SELECTION

A. Submission Instructions

Submission Details	Information
Submission Deadline	**November 13, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.**
Submission Method	**Email to tlong@workplace.org**
Email Subject	**WorkPlace Mobile App Proposal**

To be considered for funding under this RFP, bidders must submit their proposals by email to Tom Long at tlong@workplace.org by

November 13, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Proposals arriving after this time will not be accepted or considered. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE.

Please use the following subject line for your email:

WorkPlace Mobile App Proposal

B. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Understanding of objectives and quality of proposed user experience	15
Technical approach, cross-platform strategy, scalability, and maintainability	20
SMS, notifications, integrations, data management, and security	15
Relevant experience, qualifications, and client references	15
Implementation plan, project management, and staffing	10
Accessibility, language access, usability, and analytics	10
Total cost of ownership, pricing transparency, and value	15
Total	**100**

The WorkPlace may request presentations, demonstrations, clarifications, revised pricing, or reference checks. The WorkPlace reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, negotiate with one or more respondents, or make no award, consistent with applicable requirements.

C. CONTRACTING AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

- The WorkPlace anticipates entering into a written agreement with the selected vendor. Final scope, pricing, schedule, service levels, data protection terms, and deliverables will be negotiated before execution.
- The selected vendor may not use The WorkPlace's name, logo, or project details in marketing or publicity without prior written approval.
- Vendors must disclose subcontractors and may not materially change key personnel or subcontractors without The WorkPlace's written approval.
- The WorkPlace will retain ownership of its data and content. Proposals must clearly identify any vendor-owned platform, pre-existing intellectual property, third-party licensing, and custom work product, including proposed usage rights.

- The selected vendor must comply with applicable laws and contractual requirements concerning accessibility, privacy, information security, communications consent, and nondiscrimination.
- All proposal preparation costs are the responsibility of the respondent. Submission does not guarantee an award or reimbursement.
- The WorkPlace reserves the right to amend or cancel this RFP by written notice to prospective respondents.

D. Equal Opportunity

The WorkPlace is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The WorkPlace is committed to an accessible and inclusive digital experience.