

Request for Proposals - Questions and Answers Document
Occupational Training Services
Industry-Recognized Training Pipeline
November 2021

Updated 11/8/21

Similar questions may be grouped together with one answer provided for the group.

Q. Which workforce area is Pittsburgh/Allegheny County on the High Priority Occupation List provided by the Commonwealth?

- A.** The HPO list can be found in the following location:
<https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/HPOs/Pages/default.aspx>. HPOs for Pittsburgh/Allegheny County are located in the tab called “ThR” - Three Rivers Workforce Development Area.

Q. Do proposed training programs have to align with an HPO?

- A.** Aligning proposed training programs with an occupation on the HPO list is encouraged, but not required. If your proposed training program does not align with an HPO, be sure to address the quality and outlook of the occupation your program aligns with in your proposal, as described in the RFP.

Q. The RFP states that awards are expected to be in the range of \$100,000 - \$300,000. My organization has a training program with a very low cost per participant. If the total cost of our request would be less than \$100,000, would we still be eligible to apply?

- A.** Yes. The range of contract values defined in the RFP is provided for informational purposes only. It does not restrict Partner4Work from awarding contracts of value outside that range. Please note, however, that program cost will be considered as a factor in the proposal evaluation process.

Q. Can you provide a copy of the slide deck used during the bidder’s conference?

- A.** Yes. The presentation slides are posted to the following location:
<https://www.partner4work.org/document/request-proposals-occupational-training-services-industry-recognized-training-pipeline/>

Q. Will you consider funding new training programs?

- A.** Yes. However, established programs with clear curriculums, outlined start and end dates, and proven pathways to completion and employment are highly preferred. New programs without past performance to demonstrate success may be difficult for Partner4Work to evaluate.

Q. How do you define completion of a program?

- A.** Established training programs should clearly define completion of the program, obtainment of recognized-credentials, and other important milestones of participant progress. If program completion or credential attainment is vague, for some reason, applicants should clearly describe why in proposals. However, proposals with lack of clarity in these key areas may be difficult for Partner4Work to evaluate.

Q. The RFP states: "CONTRACTOR must employ highly qualified and professional staff at all levels throughout the period of performance whose quality of work is reflective of the world-class workforce development system sought by PARTNER4WORK. ..." Our question is does the instructor have to be a full time employee or can we use contract instructors?

A. Applicants may propose use of subcontractors; however, applicants who are awarded contracts will be solely responsible for contract requirements and obligations.

Q. For WIOA and TANF, what is the required process to determine eligibility?

A. Eligibility and suitability determinations for participants funded through contracts resulting from this RFP will be made by PA CareerLink or other entities designated by Partner4Work. For a more detailed description of the process, refer to the Statement of Work included in the RFP. Applicants can find more information regarding eligibility criteria on the Policy section of the Partner4Work website: www.partner4work.org/documents/policies/

Q. Is there a target per student rate for the training programs?

A. No. Partner4Work funds training at various per participant cost levels, considering the quality of the program, available funds, and likelihood of positive outcomes, among other factors. Also, Partner4Work may fund the total cost per participant of a training program or a portion thereof.

Q. If a program serves youth 16-24, would the youth only be eligible for this program if they are also low-income or residents of specific areas?

A. Partner4Work has included various funding streams in this RFP in order to accommodate a broad range of potential participants. Applicants should clearly describe the population they serve in proposals to allow Partner4Work to consider possible alignment with particular funding streams.

Q. Will we be responsible for WIOA or TANF paperwork for each participant?

A. Not primarily. Selected applicants will work closely with PA CareerLink, or other entities designated by Partner4Work, who will act as an eligibility entity, make additional services available, and handle administrative tasks related to participant paperwork and data entry. Selected applicants must coordinate closely with PA CareerLink and respond to requests for data and documentation to meet administrative requirements.

Q. Can you have people in the training cohort that are not funded through this process/funding stream or do the people in the cohorts all have to be funded through this contract. In other words, we would be mixing and matching our own funding streams for those who are in the training program.

A. Selected applicants may choose to utilize contract funds for all or some portion of a cohort's participants, depending on the terms and level of funding available through contracts resulting from this RFP.

Q. If we are requesting training funds for an identified HPO but we are not currently on the ETPL for the program in PA (we are working towards this), can we still apply for the program in this RFP?

A. Yes. A proposed program does not have to be on the ETPL to be considered through this RFP.

Q. If granted an award, to what extent will we be able to negotiate and adjust contract terms in the Partner4Work template during contract negotiations?

Q. Will our pre-existing training materials and course content, which may be used in fulfilling our contractual obligations, be considered "work product" under a contract resulting from this RFP?

A. Any agreements resulting from this RFP will be executed as vendor contracts with Partner4Work. The vendor contract template can be reviewed on Partner4Work's website at: <https://www.partner4work.org/document/partner4work-contract-templates/>. Per the RFP, selected applicants *"will be invited to negotiate a contract for services based on the project described in the proposal and stipulations of the funding source."* Although Partner4Work strongly prefers to use the terms of its vendor contract template, reasonable deviations may be considered, subject to approval by Partner4Work. Discussion of contract terms with applicants may be initiated by Partner4Work before award decisions are announced, or after, during the contract drafting process.

Q. Is it allowable to lump all of the general and administrative items together, or do you need them broken out and each one justified?

A. The RFP requires applicants to *"Provide a per participant cost rate for the proposed program, a breakdown of the cost components thereof, and a narrative describing the purpose of each cost component."* And also to *"explain how costs were developed and justify the need for proposed costs in meeting contract requirements."* The RFP does not define how applicants must present or describe the cost components of the proposed per participant cost rate; however, applicants should provide a reasonable level of detail and explanation to assist evaluators in determining the proposed per participant cost rate to be necessary and realistic. Please refer to the RFP for further detail regarding program costs.

Q. Is there a particular format you prefer for the budget section?

A. The RFP does not define a template or format for providing the proposed per participant cost rate. Applicants should provide a reasonable level of detail and explanation to assist evaluators in determining the proposed per participant cost rate to be necessary and realistic. Please refer to the RFP for further detail regarding program costs.

Q. Can profit be included under our budget as a lump sum in the per participant cost, or does it need to be broken out separately?

A. For-profit entities may include profit in the proposed per participant cost rate; however, applicants should consider Partner4Work's responsibility to determine costs as fair and reasonable, and that program costs will be a consideration during the proposal evaluation process. Applicants should provide a reasonable level of cost detail and explanation to support the proposed per participant cost rate to assist evaluators in making such a determination. Please refer to the RFP for further detail regarding program costs.