PARTNER4WORK
The Workforce Development Board for the Pittsburgh Area

Industry-Recognized Training - RFP Q&A

1. What type of timeline is requested to illustrate the major activities, tasks and services of the proposed program. Is it asking for dates for recruiting, interviews, etc? Or the dates that specific training tasks place in a particular cohort? While all the curriculum delivery is covered in each cohort, the dates are based on the dates and times of site visits.
    A. Applicants should include in their timeline any major activity, task, or service necessary to demonstrate how the proposed program model will be implemented. This may include a timeline for outreach/recruitment, enrollment, service delivery, job placement, follow-up services, etc. While specific dates may not be available for each item, applicants should specify dates and/or lengths of time for activities, tasks, and services to the extent possible. Partner4Work understands that dates are subject to change.

2. Is the expectation that the complete RFP with attachments are sent as pdf via email ? Is a hard copy delivered permitted?
    A. Proposals and attachments must be submitted as a PDF to rfp@partner4work.org. Hard copies will not be accepted.

3. In your standard contract regarding Intellectual Property (IP), it says anything that is developed is then owned by P4W. Is that something that is negotiable or non-negotiable? We already have developed coursework, but would like to use some funds for modifications due to feedback or to possibly develop a “quick”/trimmed-down version if it better fits the short project length. However, knowing our organization, that will not work if we are not the owners of the material.
    A. Subrecipients may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed or for which ownership was acquired under this award. Partner4Work reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Partner4Work purposes, and to authorize others to do so. This requirement comes from the Uniform Guidance, which governs the use of federal funding.

4. How many participants are anticipated to be in the program? The reason why I am asking is to understand the cohort sizes especially during COVID. We may partner with training partners that are required to restrict their class sizes to ~20.
    A. An anticipated or expected cohort size has not been specified for this award. Partner4Work will consider different sized cohort-models. Proposals that demonstrate reasonable and necessary costs to establish partnerships, train and support job seekers will be considered.

5. If a program is able to accommodate the young adults in the city of Pittsburgh, does the program have to encompass all of the High Priority Occupations? Or can it be specifically for IT/STEM and Manufacturing?If yes, is this considered one program for the 250k max project? Or is there a possibility to budget more than that?
   A. Applicants only need to provide training in one high priority occupation, though are not limited to selecting only one. Applicants seeking funding above $250,000 to provide multiple programs of training (e.g. IT/STEM and Manufacturing) would need to submit separate applications, which will be scored separately. No individual contract will exceed $250,000.

6. The RFP states that, "Partner4Work anticipates funding at least 5 cohort based trainings through this solicitation, with an upper limit of $250,000 per contract." Is this $250,000 per each high priority occupation or is the $250,000 for the single program provider?
   A. Partner4Work reserves the right to fund multiple contracts to a single provider and multiple contracts for a high priority occupation. No single provider will receive multiple contracts for the same HPO and no single contract will exceed $250,000.

7. Is it acceptable if the training programs are offered in an evening setting to accommodate the COVID restrictions on the number of people in a facility?
   A. Yes, training during evening hours is acceptable. There are no restrictions regarding the times during the day training must be offered for purposes of this award.

8. The way that the funding is handled, is it one lead and then the funds are subcontracted from there?
   A. Yes, Partner4Work will contract with one lead organization, which may then subcontract for other services. Lead organizations must name partner organizations in their proposals and are required to follow their internal procurement policies.

9. In the sections "executive summary, partnership description, program description", should we provide answers with this specific program model in mind? By doing so, we will describe our full consumer capabilities in the Executive Summary, but we will not be commenting on an approach to program elements such as recruitment, employment, jobs placements, career services, job development and placement, and job retention.
   A. The executive summary, to the extent possible, should include a description of the program model being proposed and delivered by the applicant.

10. Under the section regarding Program Description (page 6 of the RFP), it states: "Describe each of the following for your proposed program: (maximum 5 pages)." Is the entire "Program Description" section five pages or is it five pages for each of the bulleted, underlined points? Example: Five pages for Program Model; five pages for Target Population; five pages for Recruitment Strategy; etc., etc,.
    A. Respondents are limited to five total pages for the program description section.

11. Is the Cover Sheet for this RFP (listed on page 5 of the RFP) the same as Appendix A Request for Quotes Cover Sheet in the RFP document?
    A. The cover sheet is Appendix A.

12. On page 8 of the RFP document it says there is a budget template available on the RFP website but it is not available on the website.
    A. A budget template has been uploaded to the website here: https://www.partner4work.org/document/unlocked-budget-template/ Bidders are not required to use the budget template, but must provide a cost per participant and justification of the cost.

13. I am interested in subcontract opportunities per the scope of the RFP. How may I obtain a list of the prime contractors who are pursuing the RFP?
    A. This list will not be available until grant awards are made; at that point the list of successful bidders will be made public.

14. The RFP refers to an Appendix B, but there isn't an Appendix B shown. Can you let me know what that refers to? Is it this document? https://www.partner4work.org/document/unlocked-budget-template/
    A. The reference to Appendix B should point to the budget template. Our apologies for the confusion. Bidders are not required to use the budget template, but must provide a cost per participant and justification of the cost.

15. Will Partner4Work and/or CareerLink be collecting and sharing participant data with program partners or the general public?
    A. Participant data will be collected by the eligibility/suitability determination partner. These data will not be shared with the general public. With participant consent, participant data may be shared with program partners for the purposes of delivering programming.

16. Will all training participants for proposed programming be required to be vetted by applying through CareerLink? For instance, if we propose to train 20 participants for a

given training session through the awarded training funds and we end up having interest from 30, do those other 10 participants have to be vetted by CareerLink to participate in our program?

A. The eligibility/suitability determination partner will only determine eligibility/suitability for participants funded through this grant opportunity. Training providers may enroll other trainees in the same class with participants funded through this RFP.

17. Are we able to apply awarded funding to training sessions that end after June 30th, 2021?
    A. Initial funding will be awarded for a performance period that ends June 30, 2021. Given funding availability and performance, Partner4Work may elect to extend the contracts of successful bidders.

18. There seems to be an emphasis on young adult (18-24) training. Does your scoring rubric consider other impact driven factors such as recruiting participants who are underrepresented in the career fields (women, racial minorities, individuals living with disabilities, etc.) we are training them for?
    A. Scoring will take into consideration both the population proposed to be served by the training provider and the proposed outcomes.

19. For expressing employer buy-in in our proposal, what forms of evidence are acceptable?
    A. While MOUs with employers are preferred, Partner4Work will also accept letters of support from employers.

20. For the following section in the RFP: "Partner4Work will seperately solicit the eligibility determination, case management, and documentation functions of programming; successful respondents of this procurement will work closely with the provider(s) selected by the parallel solicitation to ensure that all administrative and reporting requirements of funding are met and programming is client centered."

    When will this follow on solicitation be released for these wrap-around services to coincide with the 11/01/2020-06/30/2021 award period? Does documentation include media capture and data tracking/reporting? Does case management include any support services such as childcare, transportation support, or other funds to empower participants to access training?
    A. This solicitation was released on September 28, 2020. Depending on need, case management may include supportive services or referral to supportive services. Training providers will be required to document and report on participant data,

placements, and training outcomes. Full wrap around services will not be provided.

21. We are sensitive about releasing our audited financials into the public domain, so were wondering if it would be acceptable to share a financial audit directly with the P4W team via a Zoom meeting, rather than submit sensitive information?
    A. In order to perform the due diligence required of Partner4Work by our funding agencies, we are required to collect the audited financial statements of potential vendors to ensure they have the capacity to handle the administrative and fiscal requirements of the grant. Partner4Work staff will only have access to this information if it is necessary for their role on this project. Financials will not be released into the public domain, but potential bidders are reminded that all materials submitted as a part of this procurement are subject to Right to Know Law requirements.

22. We have a federally negotiated indirect rate of 50%. I want to confirm if we can use that rate or if we need to limit to 10% per page 8 of the RFP. If we can use the 50% our budget may not meet the 10% Admin Cost Check in the budget template.
    A. Respondents may utilize a federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate. Indirect can be split between program and admin per your indirect cost rate plan specifications. Costs for admin, including indirect admin costs, are limited to 10% of Program Costs. Indirect program costs are not counted toward the 10% admin cost cap.

       Reasonableness of overall cost per participant, including indirect costs, will be a factor in scoring.

23. Out of the three agreements listed on the site, just clarifying that we should be reviewing the Vendor agreement?
    A. Successful respondents to this RFP will enter into a Vendor Agreement with Partner4Work.

24. The program in discussion involves our organization serving as an education provider only, with Partner4Work holding responsibility for recruitment and enrollment. In the sections "executive summary, partnership description, program description", should we provide answers with this specific program model in mind? By doing so, we will describe our full consumer capabilities in the Executive Summary, but we will not be commenting on an approach to program elements such as recruitment, employment, job placements, career services, job development and placement, and job retention.

A. Partner4Work will help amplify outreach, but provides no direct services to job seekers in our role as a workforce development board. As such, respondents cannot expect Partner4Work to play a substantial role in recruitment. A separate RFP is currently open for eligibility and suitability determination services. Respondents will be scored on their ability to prepare training recipients for employment; those with strong placement models will score better.

25. The RFP states, "*To be successful in this proposal, respondent must either be an accredited educational institution or have a close partnership with an employer or group of employers."* We are not accredited, and we are not licensed in PA. The program is to operate white-labeled through Partner4Work. Will this leave us ineligible or uncompetitive for this RFP?
    A. Competitiveness in this procurement depends on having strong relationships with employers in the Allegheny County region and the ability to place job seekers into career pathway employment. Eligible applicants are listed in the “Who can apply?” section of the RFP.

26. With this model in mind, Partner4Work would be recruiting on our behalf, essentially serving as "admissions reps". Does Partner4Work have a plan for how this will comport with the Pennsylvania board of education, and comply with PA licensing and registration requirements?
    A. Please see the answer to question 24. Partner4Work will not serve in this role. The successful respondent to the RFP currently posted here: https://www.partner4work.org/document/request-proposals-training-eligibility-services/ will provide eligibility and suitability determination and may assist with recruitment. Partner4Work will also connect successful bidders with the network of organizations providing workforce development services in our region, but it is the expectation of Partner4Work that training providers will lead recruitment efforts for their programs.

27. The RFP payment structure is per participant (as agreed upon, in this case, 40 minimum)-- 50% on enrollment into a training program and 50% when documentation of a credential earned is provided to Partner4Work. Is 50% upon enrollment, 50% upon our organization concluding the delivery of the course - regardless of individual student completion. Is this an acceptable term?
    A. Payment on contracts awarded through this RFP will be 50% upon enrollment and 50% when the documentation of a credential earned at program completion is provided to Partner4Work.

28. The program is to operate white-labeled through Partner4Work. Can you confirm that this program will be branded to students as a Partner4Work program with no mention of our school in print or online materials accordingly?
    A. Partner4Work is open to a white-labeled program; however, the program would likely need to be branded to the eligibility and suitability determination partner, as Partner4Work does not provide services directly to job seekers. To approve this relationship, Partner4Work would need to see evidence that employers supported the white labeled program in our region.

29. As a white-labeled program, our organization will not be responsible for providing any certificates of completion, transcripts, or other documentation to students in connection with the completion of the course. Can you confirm that completion or records documentation requested by students will be provided by Partner4Work?
    A. Certificates provided by Partner4Work under any circumstance are not considered industry-recognized credentials. As such, a white-labeled program where Partner4Work provided a certificate would not be eligible for the second payment upon awarding of a credential.
    As previously stated, Partner4Work does not provide direct services to job seekers in our role as a workforce development board. The eligibility and suitability determination provider may be willing to serve in this role.

30. In 2020, our organization spun out of another organization and operates as an independent organization, with financial backing from Partners. To that end, per required attachments demonstrating our financial capacity, our organization does not have one of the following: (1) Most recently submitted IRS Form 9-90, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax; (2) Most Recent independent Audit; (3) A letter from a Certified Public Accountant attesting to the fact that the entity has a financial system in place for tracking participants in training and is using accepted accounting practices. We will not have an independent audit until the Spring of 2021. Do you have any alternative financial statements we can provide to demonstrate our financial capacity? Or, would Partner4Work agree to wait until Spring 2021 for our audit?
    A. Please provide most recent tax returns, if available, and most recent financial statements.

31. How do you define a “credential earned”? Will an industry certification or college credits earned be considered as credentials earned?
    A. A credential earned must meet the WIOA definition of credential. Potential bidders can use this tool from the Department of Labor to determine whether their credential would count as industry-recognized:

https://wioacredentialtool.safalapps.com/. College credits do not count as a credential earned.

32. Who will be considered a PA Licensure – is it business based in PA or does it refer to professional licenses awarded in state of PA?
    A. Please indicate whether your organization is authorized to perform business in the Commonwealth.

33. Please explain multi-employer approach.
    A. In a multi-employer approach, a training provider has commitments from multiple employers to give preferential interviewing or hire to training program graduates.

34. Under Partnership Description, you are asking to provide an annual budget, are you expecting us to give annual revenue? If not, what all details we should provide?
    A. Please provide annual expenditure level and revenue level.

35. Budget Template – it looks like a Budget Summary template. Is this the only template that is required to be completed along with budget narrative? Do you have any document that provides additional explanation for each column of Budget Template? If not, pls provide some additional clarity for what is intended for “Program”, “Experience”, and “Training” columns. Also, provide some additional clarity on “28% Experience” field.
    A. For the purposes of the RFP, a budget and budget narrative are the only required budget documents. While bidders may utilize Partner4Work’s budget template, they are not required to. Bidders are not required to use the budget template, but must provide a cost per participant and justification of the cost.

       If using the budget template, the Experience column is for programming that would be considered work experience. It is not necessary for training providers to include work experience expenditures in their budget. The budget template is the same across all Partner4Work programs and the 28% Experience field is related to another program.

       Training costs are the direct costs related to the training activities of a program, including tuition, classroom instruction, or skill upgrading.

       Costs for materials and supplies related to training, incentives, etc. should be included in program costs. Program costs should also include the costs of staff time spent in recruitment and outreach for the program, as well as any time spent placing training recipients in jobs.

36. ADA compliance – since the programs are being offered in online distance learning format, what evidence do you expect us to provide to meet this requirement?
    A. All training providers are required to comply with physical and programmatic accommodations as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended and the regulations implementing these statutory provisions. All applicants must include an ADA certification or policy used to ensure that all ADA requirements are met.

37. As per the RFP document, there is no requirement for audited financials, whereas the downloaded cover sheet now indicates that we need to submit audited financials. We are not audited at this time. Will submitting our 2019 tax returns suffice this requirement? If not, pls advise what can we do to meet this requirement.
    A. Please provide your 2019 tax returns in addition to the most current financial statement you have available.

38. What does "Fiscal Turnover" refer to in the risk assessment?
    A. Please indicate the percentage of turnover in the past year in your key fiscal staff.

39. As we are preparing our responses for the Industry-Recognized Training Pipeline RFP, we are hoping that we would be able to complete a mutual NDA between organizations. Typically when we are providing a lot of sensitive information, as we are here, we are making sure to have this in place to protect our business and our domain expertise. We would be happy to share our standard NDA with the P4W team.
    A. Partner4Work will not enter into a mutual NDA with potential bidders.