PARTNER 4 WORK
The Workforce Development Board for the Pittsburgh Area

Request for Proposals

Digital Skills Training for Young Adults

Proposal Due:
November 27, 2017, 5 PM

Partner4Work
650 Smithfield Street, Suite 2600
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

RFP Release Date:
November 3, 2017

Partner4Work is excited to issue this Request for Proposals (RFP) for digital skills training programs serving low-income City of Pittsburgh or Allegheny County residents age 16-24. It is expected that initial contracts will run January-December 2018, with an optional renewal through December 2019.

Why are digital skills important?

Digital literacy is critical to jobs across industries in the 21st century. IT jobs alone are projected to grow 2.6x faster than the market overall in the next ten years[1] and skilled technicians are in demand at companies across Allegheny County. Nevertheless, diversity in the sector remains a challenge, with just 1% of the local tech workforce being African American.

Fully 60% of the job postings in the third quarter of 2017 were for digital skills occupations, jobs that require workers to utilize information technology to perform their work task partially or fully. Job postings for digital skills occupations advertise a mean salary of $52,000.[2] We know which jobs are in high demand, the career paths from entry-level IT jobs into advancement, starting wages in tech careers, and we know that IT is a sector with a lot of opportunity. However, most of these opportunities remain out of reach for young adults without a 4-year degree, a reality than we must work together to change. Through this project, we're looking to introduce young people, particularly young people of color and young women, to the skills they need to get into the tech sector.

How will we do this?

We know that we need to better prepare young adults for tech careers and are seeking partners to help support 100 total young adults through training for IT tech support jobs. We've partnered with industry leaders, who have developed an in-depth curriculum in IT support skills. The curriculum will be hosted online as a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). Students will access training online and be supported by an in-person instructor through a blended model.

The curriculum is broken into six modules: Tech Support Fundamentals, Computer Networking, Operating Systems, Systems Admin and IT Infrastructure, Automation, and Cyber-Security. Learners with prior knowledge can test out of modules and lessons. Those who are challenged by the curriculum can repeat lessons and move through at their own pace. Each module is expected to take 6 weeks to complete.

The course will take 8-10 months to finish, which is a significant time commitment for your program and for the young adults that will take the courses. We expect some attrition, but also expect that students who are right for the program will be excited about the learning and will be supported by your programs to finish. We expect the first group of students to begin in January 2018. Students should expect to spend 8-10 hours per week on the curriculum.

We are open to providing an instructor for the students to engage with in person and support students through their course, but do not want to reinvent the wheel if this

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[1] https://www.alleghenyconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/InflectionPoint.pdf

[2] https://www.partner4work.org/uploads/digital-skills-occupations-q3-2017.pdf

person is already on your staff. We are looking for someone who connects well with students and is already well on their way to being a subject matter expert, and can provide additional resources to train them in the curriculum. The ability to inspire students and support them to finish the course is paramount in this position. See below for more details on how this could work.

How can you partner with us?

We are looking to serve 100 young adults through this RFP, 50 in-school youth[3] (ISY) and 50 out-of-school youth[4] (OSY). Twenty-five ISY and twenty-five OSY will go through the training in year one. Fifty additional students (25 in each population) will be served in year two.

	In-School Youth	Out-of-School Youth	**Total**
Year 1	25	25	50
Year 2	25	25	50
Total	50	50	100

We are looking to partner with programs that:
- **Have the ability to recruit quickly:** we expect to be up and running with training in early January 2018, which will mean that successful bidders will already have a significant recruiting apparatus in place and have participants ready to start in January. Each successful bidder will be expected to serve 25 young adults in the first cohort; pending programmatic performance, Partner4Work reserves the right to extend successful programs for a second cohort or re-bid;
- **Are tech-literate themselves and understand the importance of tech skills:** we are looking for organizations that demonstrate internal technical capacity with a subject matter expert already on staff. It is possible that Partner4Work will procure an instructor separately if a successful organization does not employ a subject matter expert. You should clearly state in your application your capacity, technical qualifications, and if you need external teaching support. Funding allocated per participant will be dependent on whether a subject matter expert is part of your proposal;
- **Can demonstrate a history of and success with serving young adults:** cultural competency is key, and not developed overnight. The successful bidder(s) will also understand the importance of triage into a program and have a clear process for identifying young adults that are more likely to be successful in this training[5]. The successful bidder will provide case management supports to young adults in their program to enable successful program completion;
- **Can host and/or provide training for 25 learners at a time:** We are able to provide computers for learners through this grant, but successful bidders will have space and a plan for office hours, in-person trainings, and wi-fi;
- **Have successfully piloted programs in the past**: this endeavor is new and

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[3] Defined as current high school students, age 16-22. We think this will work best with juniors, but if you think otherwise and can build the case, we'll consider it.
[4] Defined as an individual 16-24 years old who is now or has been a high school dropout, someone enrolled in a GED program, or someone not attending high school.
[5] We suggest Booey's: A Ghost Code as a good starting place (https://www.partner4work.org/programs/booeys-game).

we expect bumps in the road. We are looking for a partner that can demonstrate past success in innovation, show examples of recalibrating their approach mid-program to respond to the needs of young adults, and those that are good at telling the story of what works and what doesn't.

This funding must serve low income young adults [6] (age 16-24) in the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Beyond that, we want you to push the envelope and build something great with us. Successful bidders may connect in with their own or another Partner4Work year-round funded program or may bring other resources to this project. Young adults are eligible to be in both a Partner4Work funded year-round program and this training.

One last thing: we know well that one of the surest ways of getting a young person to buy into a program is to pay them for their time. Programs are encouraged to provide stipends and/or incentives during training to facilitate participation, within the budget of the grant or using leveraged resources. Other supports such as transportation and snacks while at your program are also allowable costs.

The average cost per participant for successful proposals will be in the range of $1,150 for organizations without a subject matter expert on staff and $1,450 for organizations with a subject matter expert.

Who can apply?

Non-profits, for-profits, school districts, training providers, institutions of higher education, businesses, consortiums, trade associations or unions, pre-apprenticeships, and those with capacity are all welcome to apply.

How to Apply

Proposals must be submitted by **Monday, November 27, 2017 at 5:00 PM** to youth@partner4work.org. Emails should have the subject line "[Organization name] Digital Skills proposal". Proposals should contain the following information:

(1) **Cover Sheet**
   a. Name of organization;
   b. Primary contact name, address, phone number and email address;
   c. Proposed budget and cost per participant;
   d. Proposed number of young adults to serve and ISY or OSY;
   e. 150 word summary of the proposal
(2) **Project Description**
   Proposals should outline the strategy proposed to accomplish the requirements listed above, including:
   a. Description of target population (ISY, OSY, or both) and demonstrated capacity for serving young adults. Description should include

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[6] For this grant, eligible young adults include 16-24 year olds eligible for free or reduced priced lunch, those living in a high poverty area, public assistance recipients, high school dropouts currently enrolled in diploma retrieval or GED programming, and those with a family income at or below 235% of the federal poverty line. Eligible individuals cannot have completed a 4-year degree.

neighborhoods or schools that will be most heavily recruited from and education levels of recruits;

b. Description and timeline for recruitment process, including existing programs proposer will use for recruitment and any additional relationships that will be developed. This recruitment plan should be clear and detailed, and should include triage process, number of young adults with existing relationship to provider that could be engaged, and strategy for recruitment of additional young adults;

c. Description of programming for participants, including location, plan for supportive services, presence or absence of staff to be trained as subject matter experts, and connection to existing programs. If you have a potential subject matter expert on staff, please name this person, their role in your organization, and their credentials. If you do not have a potential subject matter expert on staff, please state this clearly;

d. Description of organizational capacity to implement and accomplish the proposed training program, including demonstration of success with serving the target population and recalibrating programs mid-funding;

e. Proposed outcomes. We expect successful bidders to help 70% of enrolled participants complete the training. How will you achieve this measure? What else will you measure to determine your success?

(3) **Cohort Budget**

We expect that successful bidders will run two cohorts, one beginning in January 2018 and one beginning after the first has finished, pending renewal of contracts. *Your budget should be reflective of a single cohort.*

Expense	P4W	Other funding source(s)	Total Cost
Instruction*			
Materials			
Indirect Costs			
Promotion/Outreach			
Supportive Services** and Case Management			
Other (list by expense)			
Total Expenses			

*Instruction costs should only be included if organization has demonstrated a subject matter expert on staff. If instruction is included, total budget can be up to $35,250 per 25 students. If instruction is not included, total budget can be up to $28,750 per 25 students.

**Laptops will be provided for students and do not need to be included in your budget.

Applicants must submit a budget narrative outlining how these funds will be used to support and implement the program. The budget narrative should thoroughly and clearly describe every category of expense listed on the form above. The narrative should explain how all costs were estimated and calculated and how they are relevant to the completion of the proposed project.

Review Process

The Partner4Work Review Committee will review proposals based on the requirements outlined above.

Questions or Requests

We welcome your questions and look forward to hearing from you. All questions or requests for additional information must be made in writing to youth@partner4work.org. Answers will be posted at www.partner4work.org to make them available to the public and ensure a fair and transparent process.

Timeline:

November 27, 2017 5:00 PM: Proposals due to Partner4Work. Late
                                 submissions will not be considered.

December 11, 2017:   Partner4Work Review Committee selects
                                 participating organizations.

Early January 2018:   Contracts and programming will begin.
                                 Programs will be expected to begin
                                 training participants in early January.

Provisions and Disclaimers:

- This Request for Proposals does not commit Partner4Work to award a contract.
- Partner4Work may make funding decisions based on initial proposal received, without discussion of the proposal with the applicant. Accordingly, each proposal should be submitted on the strongest terms that the bidder can submit to Partner4Work.
- Partner4Work retains the right to request additional information from any applicant, before a contract award.
- No costs will be paid to cover the expense of preparing a proposal or procuring a contract for services or supplies.
- All data, material, and documentation originated and prepared by the bidder pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to the Partner4Work and be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, Right to Know Law, or other applicable legislation.
- The contract award will not be final until Partner4Work and the successful applicant have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement. Partner4Work reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. No activity may begin prior to final Partner4Work

approval of the award and execution of a contractual agreement between the successful applicant and Partner4Work.

- The submission of the proposal warrants that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFP are not in excess of those that would be charged any other individual for the same services performed by the applicant.
- Applicants are advised that most documents in the possession of Partner4Work are considered public records and subject to disclosure. Partner4Work reserves the right to issue additional RFPs if and when it is in Partner4Work's best interest to do so and, may elect to negotiate and issue multi-year contracts to successful bidders under this or subsequent RFPs. Partner4Work reserves the right to fund portions of a proposal, or to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part. Rejection of a portion of a proposal does not necessarily negate the entire proposal.
- All programs and activities are designated as equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact staff to request assistance with access to this RFP.

Attachment A

INCOME GUIDELINES AND GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS OF PENNSYLVANIA'S METROPOLITAN AND NON-METROPOLITAN LABOR MARKET AREAS

Poverty Income Guidelines for All States (Except Alaska and Hawaii)

Poverty Income Level—Effective 01/26/2017

Size of Family Unit	Poverty Guideline	TANF Eligibility (235% of Poverty Guideline)
1	$12,060	$28,341
2	$16,240	$38,164
3	$20,420	$47,987
4	$24,600	$57,810
5	$28,780	$67,633
6	$32,960	$77,456
7	$36,140	$84,929
8	$41,320	$97,102

For a family unit with more than eight (8) persons, add $4,180 for each additional person to poverty guideline and $9,823 for each person to TANF eligibility level.