PARTNER 4 WORK
The Workforce Development Board for the Pittsburgh Area

Questions & Answers

Request for Proposals: TANF Youth Development Program Services 2026

Updated: 10/26/26

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in accordance with the instructions and deadlines in the RFP. Partner4Work will make reasonable efforts to provide clear and accurate responses based on the information available at the time.

Partner4Work may group similar questions, rephrase questions for clarity, and omit duplicative content. Responses are for clarification purposes and do not limit Partner4Work's rights under the RFP. Final requirements, scope, funding, or other award terms may change based on proposals received, discussions or negotiations, program needs, and the terms of any resulting agreement. In the event of a conflict, the RFP and any formally issued addenda will control.

1. Applicant Eligibility, Qualifications & Partnerships

Q1. Are for-profit, out-of-state LLCs eligible to serve as prime contractors? Must a selected provider have an established Pennsylvania office or local program site at proposal submission?
A1. The RFP does not exclude for-profit or out-of-state applicants or require a Pennsylvania office at the time of proposal submission. See Who Can Apply? for applicant eligibility and pre-award requirements.

Q2. Is prior organizational experience delivering TANF-funded or youth-development programs mandatory, or may qualifications of proposed key personnel and experienced subcontractors satisfy the experience criteria?
A2. Prior TANF-funded experience is not stated as a minimum eligibility requirement. Applicants must demonstrate the experience and organizational capacity required by the RFP, including a proven youth-development program model for each phase proposed. See Who Can Apply? and Program Model: Three-Phase Structure.

Q3. Can a provider propose only Phase 1? Is there a minimum number of youth, geographic coverage requirement, or mandatory service location?
A3. Yes. Applicants may propose for one, two, or all three phases. The RFP does not establish a minimum participant count or require providers to serve the entire eligible population. See Program Model: Three-Phase Structure and Populations to be Served.

Q6. What minimum staffing, background clearances, insurance, youth safeguarding, facility, transportation, and reporting requirements apply to Phase 1?
A6. Selected service providers must comply with all applicable Pennsylvania Act 153/background clearance requirements for staff and volunteers who work directly with youth. Transportation is not a required program component. Selected organizations will also be required to submit monthly and quarterly reports, and Partner4Work will provide the required reporting templates.

Q7. Are subcontracted instructors and local youth-serving organizations permitted? Are there limits on the proportion of services a prime may subcontract?
A7. The RFP permits applicants to use partners and subcontractors. The RFP does not establish a specific limit on the proportion of services that may be subcontracted. The lead applicant remains responsible for performance under any resulting agreement. See Who Can Apply?

Q40. Does Partner4Work anticipate minimum staffing ratios, required qualifications, or dedicated positions for case management, academic support, employer engagement, postsecondary transition services, or program management?

A40. Partner4Work does not anticipate setting minimum staffing ratios, required qualifications, or dedicated positions for these functions. Staffing should be appropriate to the proposed program model, the number of youth served and demonstrate sufficient capacity to deliver the proposed services and meet all required program outcomes.

Q45. Would a local lead provider be permitted to subcontract a defined entrepreneurship, financial-capability or career-readiness module to a for-profit training company?
A45. Yes, subject to the requirements of the RFP and any resulting agreement. The lead applicant remains responsible for the performance and oversight of its subcontractors. See Who Can Apply?

2. Funding, Budget & Payment

Q16. Given the $2.2 million in available funding and the anticipated 6–12 awards, does Partner4Work anticipate target funding ranges by phase and/or maximum award amounts for individual providers proposing multiple phases?
Q4. What is the anticipated funding range per Phase 1 award, and approximately how many Phase 1 providers do you expect to select?
A16, A4. Partner4Work has not established target funding ranges or maximum award amounts by phase. See Anticipated Awards for available funding and the factors that may affect individual award amounts.

Q5. Is the agreement cost-reimbursement, fixed-price, or another payment structure? Are reasonable for-profit contractor fees or profit margins allowable, and are there restrictions on management or indirect costs?
A5. Agreements are expected to be cost-reimbursement. See Program Cost Reimbursement, For-Profit Awardees, and Appendix C – Budget Narrative Instructions for applicable requirements.

Q11. For an out-of-state prime contractor based in Maryland, are reasonable business travel costs for a program director—including transportation, hotel accommodations, meals and incidentals, or temporary lodging when necessary for program delivery—allowable and reimbursable? If so, what per diem limits, documentation, prior

approvals, or other restrictions apply? Please also clarify whether any of these expenses must be included within an award's approved budget rather than reimbursed separately.

A11. Reasonable staff travel costs MAY be allowable and reimbursable when NECESSARY to perform the approved scope of work, where properly documented, and consistent with applicable funding requirements/resulting agreement. However, an out-of-state location does not, by itself, establish that travel or lodging expenses are necessary or reimbursable.

All anticipated travel expenses, including transportation, lodging, meals, and incidentals, must be included in the proposed budget and explained in the budget narrative. Applicants should identify the purpose, anticipated frequency and duration of travel, estimated costs, and reimbursement methodology.

Q17. Does Partner4Work have anticipated participant volume, cost-per-participant, enrollment, or outcome benchmarks that applicants should use when developing budgets and performance projections for Phase 2 and Phase 3?

A17. Partner4Work has not established target participant volumes or cost-per-participant benchmarks for Phase 2 or Phase 3. See Terms of Participation (page 9) for the enrollment period and Performance Measures (page 13) for the phase-specific outcome expectations applicants should use when developing budgets and performance projections.

Q18. Does the 10% administrative-cost review in the budget template function as a hard cap, and how does it interact with approved NICRA rates or the 15% de minimis indirect cost rate?

A18. Yes, the 10% administrative cost does function as a hard cap. Indirect is not all admin costs, they can be split between admin and program. If chosen to use the full 10% admin on indirect, no other admin costs can be budgeted/charged.

Q19. For for-profit organizations, what profit range has historically been negotiated, and what portion of negotiated profit may be subject to performance withholding?

A19. Partner4Work has not established a standard profit range or withholding percentage for this procurement. Any approved profit and performance-based withholding will be determined during contract negotiation. See For-Profit Awardees.

Q20. What is the anticipated reimbursement timeline for allowable program costs, particularly participant wages, stipends, and incentives that providers must fund upfront? Are advance payments available under any circumstances?

A20. Advance payments are not available. Partner4Work's anticipated reimbursement timeline is approximately 30–45 days for timely submitted, complete, and accurate invoices. Reimbursement is contingent upon Partner4Work's receipt of the corresponding funds from the state, and any delays or disruptions in state funding may extend the reimbursement timeline.

Q21. Will providers be permitted to reallocate funds between Phase 2 and Phase 3 during the contract period if actual enrollment or participant demand differs from projections?
A21. The RFP does not authorize unilateral reallocation of funds between phases. Any material changes to an awarded budget or scope would be subject to Partner4Work review and approval and the terms of the resulting agreement.

Q22. Does Partner4Work have target expectations regarding the proportion of funding allocated to participant wages, stipends, incentives, transportation, supportive services, and other direct participant costs?
A22. Partner4Work has not established target percentages or funding allocations for participant wages, stipends, incentives, transportation, supportive services, or other direct participant costs. Applicants are responsible for developing budgets that reflect the costs necessary to support their proposed program model and successfully deliver the required services and outcomes, consistent with applicable funding requirements.

Q39. Will minimum enrollment levels, participant volumes, and outcome expectations be established during contract negotiations, and if so, will they vary based on the phases and populations being served?
A39. Partner4Work has not established minimum enrollment levels or participant volumes. We rely on selected organizations to determine and propose realistic enrollment targets during contract development based on their program model, the phases and populations served, and their capacity to deliver services and meet the required outcomes outlined in the RFP.

3. Application & Procurement Process

Q8. Can you provide prior awardee names, number of proposals received, and historical award amounts for comparable youth-development procurements?
A8. Information on prior awards, including funded providers and award amounts, is available on Partner4Work's website at https://www.partner4work.org/. Partner4Work will not be providing the number of proposals received in prior procurements. Because this RFP introduces a new three-phase structure, past awards may not be directly comparable, and they do not set expectations for award amounts under this procurement. Proposals should be based on the funding available and the requirements described in this RFP.

Q9. Is registration and proposal submission through Submittable free of charge?
A9. There is no fee to register for or submit a proposal through Partner4Work's Submittable portal.

Q10. Are there mandatory bidder-conference attendance or other preproposal requirements beyond the posted deadlines?
A10. Attendance at the bidder's conference is not mandatory. Applicants are responsible for complying with all requirements and deadlines stated in the RFP. See Bidder's Conference and How to Apply.

Q13. The RFP does not have a page limit for the budget narrative and asks a decent # of questions to address - what is the page limit?
A13. The RFP does not establish a separate page limit for the Budget Narrative. See Proposal Elements and Appendix C – Budget Narrative Instructions.

Q14. Is the budget narrative also to be double spaced?
A14. No. The double-spacing requirement applies to the narrative proposal components identified in the RFP and does not apply to the Budget Narrative.

Q15. Will the answers be under the RFP link on the website?
A15. Yes. Responses to RFP questions that Partner4Work can answer will be posted publicly on Partner4Work's website. See Questions in the RFP.

4. Participant Eligibility, Enrollment & Phase Structure

Q23. What documentation will be considered acceptable for verifying family income eligibility at or below 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines? Will self-attestation or alternative verification methods be permitted in any circumstances?
A23. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry updates its TANF YDP policy guidance annually, and acceptable income verification documentation for the next program year has not yet been confirmed. The current Required Documents Checklist accepts self-certification as a method of last resort and telephone verification; however, these requirements are subject to change based on updated state guidance.

Q24. If a participant's family income exceeds the eligibility threshold after enrollment, including as a result of earnings received through a program-funded work experience, may the participant continue receiving services through the remainder of the program year?
A24. Eligibility is determined at the time of enrollment and remains valid for 12 months, regardless of changes in household income during that period. Only unsubsidized wages are counted toward income eligibility; earnings from program-funded work experiences are subsidized and do not count toward household income.

Q25. Must Phase 2 participants be enrolled in grades 9–10, or may out-of-school youth within the corresponding age range participate?
A25. Phase 2 is designed primarily for youth enrolled in grades 9–10, and most programming is expected to serve in-school youth. Out-of-school youth in the corresponding age range are not excluded. Providers who plan to serve out-of-school youth in Phase 2 should describe that population in their proposal, including how they will recruit them, how programming will be adapted for youth who are not in school, and how participants will be connected to Phase 3 or another appropriate next step.

Q26. Is Phase 3 intended to serve both in-school and out-of-school youth ages 16–24, and are there any anticipated enrollment targets or preferences between the two populations?

A26. Yes. Phase 3 serves youth in grades 11–12 as well as out-of-school youth ages 16–24. Partner4Work has not set enrollment targets or a preference between in-school and out-of-school youth. Proposals should describe which population(s) the provider plans to serve, the expected number of each, and how programming will be adjusted for out-of-school youth, who may need different schedules, outreach, and support than students still in high school.

Q27. Are participants expected to progress across phases, and may a single provider serve youth across multiple phases without requiring a new enrollment or formal transfer? If providers operate multiple phases, can youth remain continuously enrolled as they progress through the continuum?
A27. Partner4Work's goal is to establish a connected system where youth can progress seamlessly through phases that build on their previous experiences; however, progression through every phase is not mandatory. Organizations may apply to serve one, two, or all three phases and should describe how participants will transition between phases, including within their own programs. Please refer to the Terms of Participation (page 9) section of the TANF YDP RFP for additional guidance on participant enrollment periods and continued participation across program years.

Q28. May providers specialize in either the Postsecondary Focus track or the Career Focus track within Phase 3, or does Partner4Work expect providers to offer both? If both tracks are offered, will performance be measured separately?
A28. Providers may specialize in either the Postsecondary Focus or Career Focus within Phase 3 or propose programming that addresses both. Performance expectations are specific to each focus area, as outlined in Performance Measures (page 13) of the TANF YDP RFP. Providers offering both focus areas should anticipate tracking and reporting outcomes separately for each.

Q31. Given that providers may apply for one, multiple, or all phases, does Partner4Work have a preference for a single-provider continuum model or a network of specialized providers? Will awards be distributed across phases based on proposal quality, funding need, geographic coverage, or another methodology?
A31. Partner4Work does not have a preference for a single-provider continuum. We recognize the value of having a diverse network of providers offering different program models to meet the varying needs of youth across our region. Funding decisions will be based on several factors, including proposal quality, proposed budgets, available funding, and geographic coverage, with consideration given to ensuring services are accessible in communities with the greatest need.

Q44. For participants entering directly into Phase 2 or Phase 3 without prior TANF YDP participation, should providers establish a new baseline assessment and Individual Service Strategy (ISS) while incorporating any available prior career-planning, work-based-learning, or workforce-service history?
A44. We recognize that organizations without prior TANF YDP experience may not have existing ISS data or processes that align exactly with program requirements. Applicants should focus on demonstrating a proven program model, identifying how their existing services align with TANF YDP expectations, and explaining how

their current practices could be adapted to meet program requirements. We encourage applicants to review the Partner4Work TANF YDP Policy Guide to better understand the required program elements.

5. Program Services & Partnerships

Q29. May providers meet the Phase 2 academic support requirement through formal partnerships with schools or educational organizations, or is direct academic instruction by provider staff expected?
A29. Yes, providers may meet the Phase 2 academic support requirement through partnerships or subcontracts with schools or educational organizations; direct academic instruction by provider staff is not required. Applicants should clearly describe how these partnerships will support their proposed program model and ensure that all required services and outcomes are achieved. The lead organization remains responsible for program performance and oversight of any partners or subcontractors. Please refer to Who Can Apply? (page 6), Partnerships (pages 13-14), and Proposal Elements (page 16) of the TANF YDP RFP for additional guidance.

Q30. For Phase 2, may the required six-month mentoring relationship be delivered by program staff, or must it involve external mentors? Can group mentoring supplement individual mentoring requirements?
Q42. The Phase 2 performance measures require a mentoring relationship lasting at least six months, while WIOA Youth Element #8 references adult mentoring of at least 12 months. For TANF YDP performance purposes, should providers plan for a six-month active mentoring requirement, a 12-month mentoring relationship, or another standard?
A30, 42. The six-month career mentoring requirement for Phase 2 is distinct from the 12-month adult mentoring requirement under WIOA Youth Element #8. Career mentoring must involve a professional working in the youth's field of interest, while adult mentoring provides broader guidance and support and may be delivered by program staff, including case managers. Group mentoring may supplement but not replace individual mentoring. A single structured mentoring relationship may satisfy both requirements if it meets career-specific expectations and the full 12-month duration. Please refer to WIOA 14 Service Elements (page 11) and Performance Measures (page 13) of the TANF YDP RFP.

6. Work Experience & Performance Measures

Q32. Does Partner4Work have minimum expectations regarding the number of hours, duration, wage rate, or total compensation associated with a qualifying paid work experience?
A32. Selected providers must offer a minimum of 100 hours for a qualifying paid work experience under TANF YDP. Work experiences must be planned, structured learning opportunities at a workplace, linked to the participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS), and conclude with a documented employer evaluation. Partner4Work has not established a specific duration in weeks, program-specific wage rate, or total compensation requirement. Applicants should propose a schedule and compensation structure appropriate to their program model and participants' needs, ensuring compliance with all applicable wage and labor requirements, including minimum wage.

Q33. What activities qualify as a "work experience placement" for performance measurement purposes? Do internships, employer-sponsored projects, project-based learning, group work-based learning, job shadowing, or other employer-connected experiences count toward placement metrics?
A33. For TANF YDP performance purposes, a work experience placement involves a participant working directly with an employer at a worksite, performing actual job duties under employer supervision, and receiving wages based on hours worked. Internships may qualify when they meet these expectations. Project-based learning, employer-sponsored projects, group learning activities, and job shadowing are valuable career exploration activities but do not count as work experience placements. As outlined in the TANF YDP RFP, qualifying unpaid, credit-bearing internships may also count when they are structured, employer-supervised, connected to the participant's ISS, and involve meaningful work.

Q34. For Phase 3 Career Focus proposals, should providers interpret the statement that paid work experience is the “expected standard” as establishing a specific minimum percentage of paid placements, or is the 85% placement target the only numerical placement requirement for Career Focus?
A34. For Phase 3 Career Focus, at least 85% of participants are expected to receive a work experience placement. While paid work experience is the preferred standard, qualifying unpaid opportunities, such as employer-hosted credit-bearing internships, may also count toward this requirement.

Q35. For Phase 3, does the 85% placement requirement apply to all enrolled participants or only those who complete a defined level of participation? How are participants who exit early, disengage, relocate, decline services, or become ineligible treated in the calculation?
A35. The 85% work experience placement requirement applies to all enrolled participants, regardless of their level of participation. Participants who exit early, disengage, relocate, decline services, or otherwise do not receive a qualifying placement will count against this performance measure. Providers should have a process in place to assess participant suitability, interest, and readiness prior to enrollment to ensure participants understand and are prepared to engage in the required program services and activities.

Q36. Are providers required to directly employ participants for paid work experiences, or may they utilize third-party payroll providers or employer-of-record arrangements? Are payroll taxes, workers’ compensation, and related administrative fees allowable costs?
A36. Providers are responsible for paying participant wages for paid work experience and are reimbursed through the process described in the RFP. Providers may serve as the employer of record directly or use a third-party payroll provider or employer-of-record arrangement. If a provider uses a third party, the provider remains responsible for making sure participants are paid accurately and on time, that required employment documentation (such as I-9s) is completed, and that timekeeping records support every wage reimbursement request. Any third-party arrangement must be procured in line with federal procurement standards under 2 CFR 200.
Employer-paid payroll taxes (such as FICA and unemployment insurance) and workers’ compensation for participants are allowable costs as part of work experience wages and fringe benefits. Reasonable administrative

fees charged by a third-party payroll provider are also allowable. Proposals should show these costs as separate line items in the budget, and Partner4Work may review fees for reasonableness during budget negotiation.

Q37. How is retention measured across each phase, including the applicable measurement period and treatment of participants who exit early, transfer programs, relocate, or otherwise disengage?
A37. Retention is measured by whether a participant achieves at least one documented goal or outcome prior to program exit, such as completing an ISS goal or a work-based learning experience. This applies across all phases, regardless of the length of participation. Participants who exit early, transfer programs, relocate, or disengage are counted positively if they achieved at least one goal before exiting; those who exit without any documented achievement count negatively toward the retention measure.

Q41. For the Phase 1 and Phase 2 ISS goal-completion performance measures, does "goal completion" require completion of all goals established in the participant's ISS, completion of a defined percentage of goals, or achievement of a primary goal? How will partial completion be evaluated?
A41. ISS goal completion requires that all goals established in the participant's ISS be fully achieved. Partial completion will not count toward this performance measure. Partner4Work will provide training on developing ISS goals that are realistic, individualized, and achievable within the participant's program timeline.

Q46. The RFP does state that “Partner4Work reserves the right to add or modify performance measures in each year’s contract negotiation.” Will or can graduation for 12th graders and placement into postsecondary still be counted as major outcomes for a phase three postsecondary program serving 12th graders?
A46. Yes. For Phase 3 programs on the postsecondary track, high school graduation and enrollment in postsecondary education or training are included in the Phase 3 performance measures described in the RFP. Partner4Work’s right to add or modify performance measures during annual contract negotiation allows measures to be adjusted over time, but it is not intended to remove these core outcomes for postsecondary track programs.

Q48. The RFP does state that “Partner4Work reserves the right to add or modify performance measures in each year’s contract negotiation.” Is it possible an existing ISY provider proposing to be a Phase 3 postsecondary program with a track record of graduation and placement into college can have lower target goals of work experience percentage and paid percentage targets and more emphasis on the postsecondary education/training path process targets?
A48. All Phase 3 proposals should address the performance measures described in the RFP, including work experience measures. Partner4Work will not set different targets for individual applicants during the procurement. Proposals may describe their program design, track record, and the outcomes they expect to achieve, including an emphasis on postsecondary education and training. Final performance targets for each selected provider will be set during contract negotiation and may reflect the provider’s approved program design and the track they serve.

7. WIOA Youth / PA CareerLink® Transition & Follow-Up

Q12. Do all Phase 3 youth in a phase 3 post-secondary track have to be enrolled in CareerLink prior to the end of the program year even if they are planning to attend post-secondary, military, and/or already have a job?
Q47. For a Phase 3 postsecondary program serving 12th graders, with a track record of graduation and placement into college, is enrollment of all participants in CareerLink required? – the RFP when discussing CareerLink does state "Bidders must describe how their proposed program prepares and connects participants for that next phase "when appropriate."
A12,47. Enrollment in PA CareerLink® is not required for every Phase 3 participant. The RFP asks providers to connect participants to WIOA Youth services or PA CareerLink® when that is the appropriate next step. A participant who is enrolling in postsecondary education, entering the military, or already employed has a defined next step and does not need to be enrolled in PA CareerLink® before exiting. Providers should still make sure every Phase 3 participant is familiar with PA CareerLink® and knows how to access it later, through the structured engagement activities described under PA CareerLink® Engagement and Network Accountability. Each participant's next step should be documented in their ISS.

Q38. How will provider performance be evaluated when participants decline enrollment into WIOA Youth services or choose not to engage with PA CareerLink?
A38. Providers will not be penalized when a participant chooses not to enroll in WIOA Youth services or engage with PA CareerLink®. Performance is based on the measures described in [Section X, Performance Measures], which focus on whether participants reach a concrete next step, such as postsecondary enrollment, training, or employment. For participants whose next step does include WIOA Youth services or PA CareerLink®, Partner4Work will look at whether the provider offered the connection, made the referral, and shared the participant's information as described under What Travels with the Participant. Providers should document when a participant was offered a referral and declined.

Q43. Is co-enrollment in WIOA Youth or connection to PA CareerLink required for all participants to satisfy follow-up service requirements, or only for participants for whom those services are appropriate and available? How should providers address participants who are TANF-eligible but not eligible for WIOA Youth services?
A43. Co-enrollment in WIOA Youth is not required for all participants. Providers should connect participants to WIOA Youth services or PA CareerLink® when those services are appropriate and available, based on the goals in the participant's ISS.

TANF YDP eligibility (Family Size and Family Income at 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines) is broader than WIOA Youth eligibility, so some participants will not qualify for WIOA Youth. For these participants, providers should help them reach their next step in other ways, such as postsecondary education, training, or employment. PA CareerLink® services are open to all job seekers regardless of WIOA eligibility, so providers can still introduce these participants to PA CareerLink® as a resource.