Questions & Answers, 2nd Edition
Request For Proposals: WIOA Career & Business Services RFP 2026
Updated: 11/6/26

Q35. When evaluating a bidder responding to Options 1, 2, and 3, will Partner4Work consider the operational and programmatic value of an integrated service-delivery model in the evaluation and scoring?
Q36. Is an integrated service-delivery model across Options 1, 2, and 3 considered an evaluation strength? If so, under which proposal section and scoring criterion should bidders demonstrate the added value of this approach?
A35, 36. Each option is reviewed and scored separately against the scoring criteria in Proposal Requirements and Process. Bidders do not receive additional points for proposing more than one option. Partner4Work may award options to different organizations, so each option's Program Narrative must stand on its own and show how the model would work if only that option were awarded. Bidders proposing more than one option may describe the added value of an integrated model under Program Narrative element 3h, Partnership & Integration, and may also use 3j, Other Factors. Because all awarded providers must work as one coordinated system (see Requirements for All Options), reviewers will look at how well any proposed model coordinates across providers, whether or not the same organization holds more than one award.

Q37. Because all three options must incorporate the Business Services Team model, what specific employer-engagement and BST responsibilities does Partner4Work expect the Option 2 provider to perform, particularly if a separate Option 3 provider is awarded?
A37. For Option 2, business services are limited to what is needed to support the Dislocated Worker population. This includes responding to layoffs and WARN notices in coordination with Rapid Response, connecting Dislocated Worker participants to employers hiring for their skills, sharing job openings with the BST and other providers, and documenting employer activity in CWDS. The Option 2 provider is not expected to lead broad employer outreach. The BST measures apply to Option 2 as proposed, and numeric targets will be set at contract negotiation. If an Option 3 provider is awarded, the BST coordination model and measures for Options 1 and 2 will be reevaluated to reflect the coordinating role of the Option 3 provider.

Q38. For Option 2, can Partner4Work provide recent historical information regarding Dislocated Worker utilization of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), including the number of participants receiving ITAs, typical ITA amounts, completion rates, and training-related placements?
A38. Partner4Work will not provide detailed historical ITA data for this RFP. Dislocated Worker use of ITAs has been historically low, and Partner4Work sees the ITA component as a key strategy for increasing training participation among Dislocated Workers this cycle. Bidders should use their ITA Model narrative (Proposal Element 3d) to describe how they will identify participants who would benefit from training, help them select ETPL programs that lead to in-demand jobs at or above the self-sufficiency wage, and support them through completion and into employment

Q39. Please clarify the respective responsibilities of Partner4Work and the Option 2 provider for ITA assessment, approval, administration, monitoring, and CWDS documentation to help bidders determine appropriate staffing and service-delivery capacity.
A39. Partner4Work is the fiscal agent for all occupational and work-based training. It holds training funds and directly executes and administers ITA agreements with training providers. The SUBRECIPIENT is responsible for assessing each participant's suitability for ITA-funded training consistent with TEGL 19-16 and Partner4Work's ITA policy, helping the participant select an ETPL program that leads to in-demand jobs at or above the self-

sufficiency wage, preparing the ITA request, supporting the participant through enrollment and completion and into employment, and documenting all related services in CWDS. Partner4Work gives final approval by issuing an ITA voucher through the case management provider. The training provider is responsible for keeping and submitting attendance and course completion records, as outlined in Partner4Work's ITA policy found on page 17 of our WIOA Title I Adult & Dislocated Worker Policy Guide - PY26. Partner4Work monitors training activity as part of its contract oversight (Statement of Work, Section 21).

Q40. What level of on-site presence does Partner4Work expect from an Option 2 provider at PA CareerLink® Downtown Pittsburgh and PA CareerLink® Allegheny East?
A40. Staffing at the PA CareerLink® centers is required only for Option 1 (see Proposal Element 3a). Option 2 providers are expected to contribute to orientations and workshops relevant to Dislocated Workers, coordinate with Rapid Response and PA CareerLink® partners, and reach Unemployment Compensation claimants, many of whom use the centers. For reference, the current Dislocated Worker provider does not deliver services at either PA CareerLink® location. Bidders should describe the on-site presence they propose and how it supports Dislocated Worker recruitment and service delivery.

Q41. For Option 2, what annual number of Newly Activated Participants, active participants, or average Dislocated Worker caseload should bidders use for staffing and budget assumptions, and approximately how many existing Dislocated Worker participants are expected to transition to the selected provider as of July 1, 2027?
A41. Partner4Work does not intend to prescribe a caseload. Bidders should propose staffing and volume assumptions that fit the requested funding level and their model. Numeric targets, including Newly Activated Participants, will be set at contract negotiation.

Q42. Will the bidders' conference slides, recording, and Q&A document be posted on the RFP page, and approximately when?
A42. Yes. The recording of the October 14 bidders' conference will be posted on the Partner4Work webpage for this RFP. Answers to all questions are posted publicly at www.partner4work.org and updated as new questions are answered.

Q43. The RFP allows consortium proposals with a lead applicant and fiscal agent. Does Partner4Work maintain, or would it be willing to share, a list of interested organizations (or those who registered for the bidders' conference who consent to be listed) to help bidders identify potential teaming partners?
Q55. Will you share a list of organizations that have expressed interest in bidding, so we can approach them about potential partnership?
A43, 55. Partner4Work does not maintain a formal teaming list for this RFP.

Q44. Does Partner4Work give any preference, scoring consideration, or special outreach related to woman-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned, or other small and disadvantaged businesses, either as lead applicants or as subcontractors/partners?
A44. The RFP does not provide a scoring preference, set-aside, or additional points based on business ownership status. Organization Description 2d asks about experience with and commitment to serving marginalized and historically underrepresented communities, which is about the populations served, not ownership. Applicants are welcome to include small, minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses as partners or subcontractors. Any subcontracts under a resulting agreement must follow 2 CFR 200 procurement standards, including the affirmative steps in 2 CFR 200.321, as applicable.

Q45. Is an Option 3 (Business Services Only) award firmly planned? If so, how does Partner4Work envision the coordinating role with the Business Engagement Office and the PA CareerLink Business Services Team, and is there a current business services structure that an Option 3 provider would be replacing or building on?
A45. An Option 3 award is not guaranteed. Partner4Work has made up to $500,000 available and will award if it chooses to make an award in this category. Option 3 is a new model with no current one-to-one equivalent. It responds to the 2024 systemwide employer engagement review, which found inconsistent job seeker-to-employer matching, uneven PA CareerLink® brand recognition, and an underdeveloped BST structure. Partner4Work is considering a single, coordinated business services model across the PA CareerLink® system in place of the current partner-by-partner approach. The Option 3 provider would work in close partnership with Partner4Work's Business Engagement Office and align its work with the PA CareerLink® Business Service Team. Bidders should describe how they would build on existing BST relationships and partner activity rather than duplicate them.

Q46. Are employer-facing programs that train and support small business owners and their teams (for example, food service and hospitality employers) a fit for the employer engagement and quality-jobs priorities in the RFP? Are there priority industry sectors in Allegheny County and Pittsburgh for this procurement?
A46. The business services in this RFP focus on connecting employers to qualified candidates from across the PA CareerLink® system, developing job opportunities, and engaging employers on job quality. Programs that train and support small business owners can be a fit when they lead to hiring PA CareerLink® candidates into quality jobs, meaning jobs at or above Partner4Work's self-sufficiency wage with benefits and a pathway to advancement. Business development training on its own, without a hiring or talent pipeline connection, is not the core of this scope. Bidders may describe related programs as leveraged resources under 3j, Other Factors. Note that Partner4Work administers incumbent worker training directly. The RFP does not name priority sectors.

Q47. For the required letters of commitment (referral partner, employer partner, and program partner), may one organization satisfy more than one category? Is there a required format or template?
A47. At least three letters are required, one from each category (referral partner, employer partner, and additional program partner). Each category should be met by a different organization. A partner may describe more than one role in its letter, but it counts toward one category. There is no required template. Letters should be signed on the partner's letterhead, and describe the specific commitments the partner is making to your proposed program.

Q48. For Option 3, the Statement of Work marks Sections 4 through 7 as not applicable. Please confirm whether Program Narrative elements 3c (Jobseekers), 3d (ITA Model), 3f (Dislocated Worker Recruitment), and 3g (Youth Engagement) may be marked not applicable to Option 3 bids.
A48. Yes. As stated in the earlier response on this topic, an Option 3 narrative may mark 3c (Service Delivery - Jobseekers), 3d (ITA Model), 3f (Dislocated Worker Recruitment Strategy), and 3g (Youth Engagement) as "Not applicable to Option 3." Keep each heading in place so reviewers can see that the omission is intentional. Option 3 bidders must still address 3a, 3b, 3e, 3h, and 3i, and may address 3j and 3k.

Q49. Applicants without prior Title I-B contracts: how will past experience with comparable workforce, training, or business-support programs be evaluated in the Organization Description, and are there specific forms of documentation Partner4Work prefers?
A49. Past experience is evaluated under Organization Description, element 2b. That element asks for experience managing workforce and training programs, especially programs similar to the ones in this RFP. Experience with comparable workforce, training, or employer-facing programs will be considered. Prior WIOA Title I-B contracts are not required. Describe the individuals or employers served, the services delivered, funders, contract values,

and performance outcomes, and explain how that experience carries over to WIOA requirements such as eligibility documentation, CWDS data entry, and the federal performance indicators. No specific forms are required within the page limit. Partner4Work may request additional documentation, such as audits or financial statements, during the pre-award assessment.

Q50. Under the cost-reimbursement structure, are advance payments or a shorter reimbursement cycle available to smaller organizations? What is the typical timeline from invoice to payment?
A50: Advanced payments and shorter reimbursement cycles are not available. As long as we are reimbursed from our partners with no holdups (budget impasses, state issues, etc.), we issue reimbursements between 30-45 days as long as invoices are received by the due date.

Q51. May a bidder submit proposals for more than one option as a lead applicant while also participating as a named partner in another bidder's proposal for a different option?
A51. Yes. Options are separate awards, so an organization may be the lead applicant for one or more options and a named partner in another bidder's proposal for a different option. Bidders should disclose all such arrangements in their proposal and show they have the capacity to meet every commitment if more than one proposal is selected.

Q52. Are there requirements specific to applicants based outside Pennsylvania, such as registration, licensing, or an expectation of local presence in Allegheny County? Which registrations and identifiers must be in place before award?
A52. The RFP does not require applicants to be based in Pennsylvania or to have an office in Allegheny County. All applicants must be able to serve all residents of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh, deliver services in community-based settings and virtually, and work closely with PA CareerLink® partners. Option 1 providers must deliver services at both comprehensive centers. Applicants must be legally organized and in continuous operation for at least three years, be eligible to receive public funds, and not be suspended or debarred. Applicants must also meet all pre-award requirements, including insurance, registrations, and identifiers.

Q53. Will there be additional opportunities, such as informational calls or a networking event, for prospective bidders and subcontractors to connect with Partner4Work staff and current PA CareerLink providers before the December 4 deadline?
A53. No additional informational sessions or networking events are planned. To keep the process fair and open, all questions must be submitted in writing to rfp@partner4work.org by November 11, 2026, and answers are posted publicly. Partner4Work staff cannot meet one-on-one with prospective bidders about this RFP during the procurement.

Q54. May a qualified Pittsburgh/Allegheny County lead provider include a remote financial capability, employer financial-readiness, or operations/reporting technical-assistance subcontractor in its proposal? If so, should subcontractor qualifications and the proposed allocation of work be included in the main provider's Submittable response and budget?
A54. Yes. A lead applicant may include subcontractors in its proposal, including remote subcontractors delivering a defined component. As noted in the earlier response on subcontracting, the RFP does not set separate local-presence requirements for subcontractors, but the lead applicant remains responsible for all performance and RFP requirements

Q56. Is a subcontracted software tool an allowable cost under the proposal budget?
A56. Yes, software is an allowable cost if it is necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the program under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E. Include it under Other Program Costs (technology) and give enough detail in the budget narrative

for Partner4Work to assess the cost, including the tool's purpose, the cost basis (for example, license or subscription fees), and how costs are allocated if the tool is also used for other programs. CWDS remains the only system of record, so any tool must support CWDS rather than replace or duplicate it. Bidders should also explain how the tool protects participant data.

Q57. If our organization has not previously delivered WIOA-funded services, could we serve as the lead applicant by hiring a program manager with documented WIOA delivery and management experience? Could that manager's prior experience satisfy the relevant experience requirements, or must the lead organization itself demonstrate prior comparable workforce-program delivery?
A57. Yes. Prior WIOA-funded experience is not required to serve as lead applicant but is strongly encouraged. As noted in the earlier response on this topic, experience with comparable workforce, training, or employer-facing programs will be considered under Organization Description, element 2b. That element evaluates the organization's own experience, along with the programmatic, administrative, and fiscal capacity described under Who Can Apply. A program manager with WIOA delivery and management experience strengthens your Staffing Plan (Proposal Element 3a) and key staff qualifications, but it does not replace the organization's own experience and capacity. If the manager is not yet on staff, say so and describe your hiring plan and timeline. Partner4Work may review the organization's capacity further during the pre-award assessment.

Q58. Can a for-profit based outside Pennsylvania serve as the lead applicant, or would I need a local entity as lead and fiscal agent?
A58. Yes. For-profit organizations are eligible to apply as lead applicants (see Who Can Apply and For-Profit Awardees). As noted in the earlier response on out-of-state applicants, the RFP does not require the lead applicant or fiscal agent to be based in Pennsylvania. The lead must meet all eligibility and pre-award requirements, including insurance, registrations, and identifiers, and must be able to serve all residents of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh. Any proposed profit must be separately identified in the budget and budget narrative and will be determined during contract negotiation.

Q59. Can you point me to the section of the RFP that defines where services must be delivered, so I know whether a remote model works for any of the three bidding options?
Q60. The public Q and A says there are no local-presence minimums for subcontractors. Does that same flexibility apply if I propose as lead with local partners handling in-person pieces?
A59, 60. Service delivery locations are described in General Information, Overview: WIOA and One-Stop Centers, and in Statement of Work, Section 3 (Remote & Community-Based Services), Section 11 (Site Administration & Operations), and Section 12 (Career Resource Centers). Proposal Element 3a also notes that staffing at PA CareerLink® locations applies only to Option 1. Option 1 requires services at both PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers, including staff in the Career Resource Centers, so a fully remote model does not work for Option 1. Options 2 and 3 do not require staffing at the centers. All awarded providers must still be able to serve all residents of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh, deliver services virtually and in community-based settings, and work closely with PA CareerLink® partners. Fully remote models are not allowable for any option.

Q61. Are there insurance, bonding, or registration requirements that are different for out-of-state for-profits?
A61. The RFP does not establish separate insurance, bonding, or registration requirements solely because an applicant is an out-of-state for-profit organization. Any selected awardee must satisfy all applicable pre-award and contracting requirements, which may vary based on the organization's legal status, proposed activities, and the resulting agreement. For general reference, Partner4Work's current PY26 Subrecipient Agreement Template describes standard contracting requirements, including insurance and entity-registration requirements: https://www.partner4work.org/document/partner4work-contract-templates/. Final requirements will be confirmed during the pre-award and contracting process.

Q62. On page 18, the RFP requires the proposal to be written in 11 point, Calibri font, and double-spaced. Please confirm: This is only applicable to the Executive Summary, Organizational Description, and Program Narrative; That tables, charts/graphs, and graphics may be single-spaced and in a smaller font as long as legible; That question prompts may be truncated/removed and single spaced as long as clear headings are provided.
A62. The formatting requirements (11-point Calibri, double-spaced, 1-inch margins) apply to all narrative documents: the Executive Summary, Organization Description, Program Narrative, and Budget Narrative. As noted in the earlier response on formatting, tables, charts, and graphics placed inside the narrative count toward the page limit. They may be single-spaced and use a smaller font as long as they stay legible (no smaller than 10-point). Attachments such as the organizational chart and jobseeker flow chart may use whatever formatting is needed for readability. Question prompts may be shortened or removed, as long as each element is clearly labeled with its heading and appears in the general order of the Proposal Elements. Headings may be single-spaced.

Q63. Please confirm that the Customer Journey Flow mentioned on page 20 of the RFP is considered a required attachment and therefore excluded from the page limitations.
A63. Yes. The jobseeker flow chart requested in Proposal Element 3c is treated as an attachment and does not count toward the Program Narrative page limit. It is required for Options 1 and 2. Option 3 bidders, who may mark 3c as not applicable, do not need to submit one.

Q64. During the bidder's conference slide 31 stated that the budget rules are not interchangeable. Should the Budget Guidance document provided for this RFP be exactly the same as what was provided with the WIOA Youth Career Services RFP? If not, can you please provide updated Budget Guidance for Career & Business Services?
A64. No. Budget guidance is specific to the applicable procurement and should not be treated as interchangeable across RFPs. An earlier version of the WIOA Career & Business Services Budget Guidance was mistakenly posted to the WIOA Youth and TANF Youth RFP webpages. It has been taken down. Partner4Work apologizes for any confusion. Applicants responding to the WIOA Career & Business Services RFP should follow the Additional Budget Guidance currently posted on the webpage for this RFP, together with the required Budget Template, Appendix C – Budget Narrative Instructions, the RFP, and published Questions & Answers.

Q65. Please confirm that no training or work experience dollars should be included in our budget and that Partner4Work will be responsible for fiscal aspects of these activities.
A65. Correct. For this RFP, Partner4Work is the fiscal agent for occupational and work-based training, including ITA, OJT, CJT, and IWT. Bidders should not include tuition, fees, or employer wage reimbursements for these activities in their proposed budgets. Bidders should budget for the staff and other operating costs necessary to support participants and employers through these activities. See the Additional Budget Guidance posted with this RFP.

Q66. Please confirm that we should budget for computer equipment for team members.
A66. Bidders may budget for staff computer equipment when it is necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the proposed program. For Option 1, bidders should also consider whether equipment or technology is already provided as a shared PA CareerLink® one-stop resource. The Additional Budget Guidance posted with this RFP explains the distinction between shared one-stop resources and provider-specific supplies, equipment, and technology. For Options 2 and 3, the shared one-stop resource considerations described in that guidance do not apply. Proposed technology costs should be clearly explained in the Budget Narrative.

Q67. For team members that are assigned to both the Downtown Pittsburgh office and the Allegheny East office, please confirm that you will allow mileage reimbursement when traveling between offices.
A67. Yes. Local mileage for staff traveling between PA CareerLink® Downtown Pittsburgh and PA CareerLink® Allegheny East for program purposes is an allowable cost under 2 CFR 200.475. It must follow the bidder's written travel policy and be reasonable. Include it under Other Program Costs (travel) and show the estimated miles and rate in the budget narrative.

Q68. Thank you for the specific instructions about the quantity and type of files allowed to be uploaded in the Submission Portal under "3. Proposal Uploads." In our experience, some portals have a maximum allowed file size. If your portal has such a limit, can you please provide?
A68. Please refer to Submittable's Help Center for current information regarding platform file upload size limits: https://submittable.help/en/. The application form will also identify any requirements applicable to individual upload fields, including the number of files that may be uploaded and the accepted file types. Applicants should follow the requirements displayed in the application form when preparing and uploading their materials.