



Request for Interest

Job Quality Best Practices in support of Direct Care Workforce Initiative

RFI Release Day:

April 15, 2025

Responses Due:

Rolling until August 31, 2025

Partner4Work
650 Smithfield Street, Suite 2400
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Any agreements resulting from this RFI will be funded 100% through Non-Federal Funding up to \$50,000 via Partner4Work as the grant recipient and 0% through Federal Funding up to \$0.

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SUMMARY

Partner4Work, the Workforce Development Board for the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, is seeking information and expressions of interest from employer partners committed to improving job quality and retention within the Direct Care workforce (including home health aides, personal care aides, and similar roles).

Through this RFI, Partner4Work intends to gather certain information related to local employers delivering direct care services such that it may be in a position to provide planning grants to responsive employers who are selected to collaboratively design customized workforce strategies focused on recruitment, retention, and career advancement. Upon successful completion of the planning phase and at Partner4Work's discretion, participants will be invited to apply for implementation funding to bring their strategies to life.

Background

Direct Care workers are essential but face significant systemic challenges:

- Turnover rates are estimated at 40-60% annually
- Average job posting takes 32 days to fill in Allegheny County
- 75% of Direct Care workers in Allegheny County make below the self-sufficiency wage and the top 10% of Direct Care workers make less than \$40,000 annually
- There is a perceived lack of clear and direct career pathways

These challenges compromise both workforce stability and patient care. In response, Partner4Work is investing in employer-led solutions to improve job quality, attract and retain talent, and make caregiving a viable and fulfilling career

Employers that successfully complete this planning grant will be invited to apply for an implementation grant to receive additional support in bringing the plans to life. During implementation, PA CareerLink® will deliver on workforce recruitment strategies and will provide career navigation and supportive services to new hires and other qualified individuals as needed. Employees will be connected with industry-aligned training where possible, and job quality implementation support will be offered by Partner4work and/or organizational partners. These factors will ultimately lead to business benefits that include becoming more competitive in attracting talent and increased retention, productivity, and innovation.

Program Dates

The process of securing the initial agreements resulting from this RFI is estimated to begin in or around May 2025 and extend until implementation begins. We intend for implementation activities to begin no more than 6 months after the planning phase but recognize that every employer is different and will adjust timelines accordingly. Organizations that successfully complete the planning grant process will be eligible for implementation funding, with an initial implementation grant running through June 30, 2026, with potential to extend if further funding is made available. Any contracts or additional funding beyond those initially awarded through this RFI are at the sole discretion of Partner4Work. Partner4Work reserves the option to modify contracts on a year-to-year basis. The agreement is not renewable after June 30, 2027.

Anticipated Awards

Planning Phase Awards

- Planning grants of \$3,000–\$6,000 will support the development of job quality improvement strategies.
- Selected employers will co-design career pathways, conduct worker feedback surveys, and establish partnerships with PA CareerLink®.

- Planning activities begin as early as May 2025.
- The planning phase is expected to conclude within 6 months.

Implementation Phase Awards

- Employers that complete the planning phase may, at Partner4Work discretion, be invited to apply for implementation funding.
- Initial implementation grants run through June 30, 2026, with potential for renewal through June 30, 2027 (funding dependent).

Selection & Funding

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Selection will be based on:

- Alignment with initiative goals
- Evidence of leadership commitment
- Feasibility of implementation
- Capacity for collaboration

Organizations that participated in the CHC PAC Learning Collaborative may receive priority consideration at Partner4Work's discretion.

Planning Grant Payments

Successful bidders may invoice during the planning grant process. If an organization demonstrates commitment to creating a job quality implementation plan, the organization will continue to be eligible for monthly payments of no more than \$6,000 total. Selected applicants must also be up to date with all contract reporting and documentation requirements in order to receive payment.

SCOPE OF WORK

The following Scope of Work presents a description of the programmatic and administrative requirements applicable to any contract resulting from this RFI. The selected applicant, referred to as "CONTRACTOR" below, will be required to comply with all standards described herein.

Selected partners will work with Partner4Work and PA CareerLink® to:

- 1) Develop Workforce Strategies
 - a) Create clear career pathways ("career lattices")
 - b) Survey staff to identify needs and priorities
 - c) Design and plan for job quality improvements
- 2) Recruitment
 - a) Define candidate profiles and post open positions through PA CareerLink®
 - b) Partner with workforce agencies to access qualified candidates and supportive services
 - c) Maintain responsibility for advancing job quality and career mobility for new hires
- 3) Support Services
 - a) Refer employees to PA CareerLink® for career navigation, job placement, training, and supportive services
 - b) Help determine employee eligibility for available services

- c) Participate in reporting and information-sharing protocols
- 4) Collaboration
 - a) Collaborate with Partner4Work and PA CareerLink® to solve sector-wide challenges
 - b) Share insights to strengthen regional workforce systems"

WHO SHOULD RESPOND

We welcome responses from nonprofit and for-profit organizations employing Direct Care workers, including:

- Certified nursing assistants
- Home health aides
- Personal care aides
- Caregivers and companions

Eligibility Requirements

- In good standing with the federal government
- Valid Unique Entity ID (UEI)
- Proof of insurance
- Must pay a minimum wage of \$14.21/hour (or the current median wage for this role)
- Willingness to partner with Partner4Work and PA CareerLink® to improve job quality
- Entities suspended, debarred, or otherwise excluded from government funding are not eligible.

HOW TO RESPOND

Submissions should be sent to Partner4Work at RFP@partner4work.org. Responses to this RFI will be accepted by Partner4Work beginning on May 1, 2025 until August 31, 2025. Emails must have the subject line "Proposal, Direct Care Worker [Organization name]." Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. Proposals must be submitted in 11-point, Calibri font, double-spaced with 1-inch page margins. Your proposal may not be considered if page limitations and formatting requirements are not met. Required attachments will not count toward the page limitations established below. Your proposal must contain all the content below in the same general order illustrated. Strong proposals will demonstrate a full understanding of the requirements described throughout this RFI and establish the capacity, experience, and program design needed to meet the required standards and goals.

Partner4Work will review applications on a rolling basis and applicants can expect to receive a response within 1 month of submission:

1. **Cover Sheet** – Use template provided. (See Partner4Work’s webpage for this RFI)
2. **Executive Summary** (maximum 2 pages) – Include each of the following:
 - a. Organizational Description
 - i. Basic organizational description, including but not limited to: year established, legal status, mission, principal programs and services, executive leadership, annual budget, starting wages for direct care workers, and number of full-time staff.
 - ii. Administrative and fiscal capacity, including but not limited to: Your organization’s proven ability to provide fiscal support and oversight, utilize information systems, manage resources and personnel, and produce timely and accurate reports.
 - b. Problem Statement

- i. Overview of challenges experienced with regard to current staffing structure and levels related to direct care work. This could include, but is not limited to: Turnover rates, average time to fill postings, number of open positions by employee classification, frequency and duration of full staffing levels, and major reasons for resignations.
 - ii. Brief review of previous efforts to increase staffing and address staff retention.
 - c. Initial Goals
 - i. Identification of areas to be addressed by this project and tangible goals wished to be achieved

Timeline

Release of RFI:	April 15, 2025
Proposal submission opens:	May 1, 2025
Response deadline	August 31, 2025
Anticipated notification to respondents begins:	One month after response submission

Questions

All questions or requests for additional information regarding this RFI must be made in writing to RFP@partner4work.org. Emails must have the subject line "Questions, Direct Care Worker [Organization name]." Answers will be posted publicly at www.partner4work.org. Interested parties are encouraged to check the website frequently for updates.

Disclaimers

- [Executive Order 2021-06, Worker Protection and Investment](#) must be followed throughout this RFI.
- This Request for Interest (RFI) does not commit Partner4Work to award a contract.
- Partner4Work may select a firm based on its initial proposal received, without discussion of the proposal. Accordingly, each proposal should be submitted on the most favorable terms, from a price and technical standpoint, that the bidder can submit to Partner4Work. Partner4Work may, however, have discussions with those firms it deems in its discretion to fall within a competitive range.
- Partner4Work reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant, request oral presentations from applicants, or conduct site visits from any applicant before a contract award.
- 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.
- Partner4Work may, at its discretion, adjust the level of funding provided to successful bidders under this RFI and/or consider the funding of proposals not initially funded under this RFI at a later date.
- 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 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 bidder 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 bidder and Partner4Work.
- The submission of the proposal warrants that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFI are not in excess of those that would be charged to any other individual for the same services performed by the bidder.
- 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 RFIs 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 RFIs.

- 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 RFI.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Additional information regarding Partner4Work is provided below. Because a key component of this project will be collaboration, respondents should have a basic familiarity with the workforce development system that Partner4Work and PA CareerLink® operate within, including the requirements of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

About Partner4Work

TRWIB, Inc. (dba “Partner4Work”) is the workforce development organization that connects funding, expertise, and opportunities to develop a thriving workforce in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Partner4Work delivers a comprehensive portfolio of programs and initiatives for adults and youth to ensure that current and future needs of employers, job seekers, and underemployed workers are met.

Helping businesses find and prepare the talent they need to thrive

As a non-profit organization, Partner4Work offers a wide variety of no-cost services to help regional employers attract the talent they need to thrive. From customized labor market data to assistance with finding diverse talent, Partner4Work is the resource to deliver customized employment solutions for any business.

Breaking down barriers to career opportunities

Partner4Work helps provide adult and young adult job seekers with the opportunities to find meaningful employment. Through our providers, we provide access to career training and exploration programs; employment assistance; job search help; and a robust summer jobs program. Partner4Work opens the door to career opportunities.

Providing community organizations with resources to make an impact

Partner4Work proudly partners with more than 80 organizations in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to provide opportunities for job seekers and businesses alike. We partner with community-based organizations, economic development agencies, training providers, businesses and educators to collectively bridge the gap between people looking for work and employers in need of talent.

As the Workforce Development Board (WDB) for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Partner4Work has programmatic and administrative responsibility for services of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provided in the workforce development areas of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Partner4Work also oversees employment and training programs for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Allegheny County.

To find out more about Partner4Work: www.partner4work.org

PA CareerLink® Comprehensive Centers

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the primary federal law governing the funding and provision of workforce development services to job seekers, employers, and other stakeholders. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access resources to succeed in the labor market, and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. One of the cornerstones of WIOA is the one-stop service delivery system that meets the needs of job seekers and employers. One-stop centers, also known as American Job Centers, include a collection of agencies responsible for providing seamless service delivery to job seekers and employers. In Pennsylvania, the one-stop system is branded and referred to as “PA CareerLink®.” Partner4Work assists in overseeing two comprehensive one-stop centers in the Pittsburgh area – PA CareerLink® Downtown Pittsburgh and PA CareerLink® Allegheny East – offering the full range of

PA CareerLink® services. Together, these centers receive more than 10,000 visits per year and provide access to a broad array of career-related services and information in one place, creating a vital link in connecting job seekers and employers. PA CareerLink® also provides a basic level of assistance and services to customers virtually and in community-based settings, through partner agencies that provide access to host locations for staff of PA CareerLink®. Residents of Allegheny County may participate in services at either center, regardless of whether they live in or outside the City of Pittsburgh.

While PA CareerLink® offers a variety of services to help diverse job-seekers connect with employment opportunities, it also works to assist employers in hiring. It provides materials for guidance surrounding compensation and benefits, job market data, apprenticeships, compliance, and other policy needs, and helps connect employers with qualified candidates. Employers can also request free assistance from PA CareerLink® staff to receive individualized solutions as needed. For more information about how PA CareerLink® can benefit employers, visit:

<https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Common/LandingPage/Employer>