

Application for Funding

- Issued by: United Workforce Development Board, Inc. (Career Link)
- Program: Adult Re-Entry Program
- Date Issued: Friday, October 22, 2021
- Due Date: One email version in Microsoft WORD of the proposal and an Adobe PDF cover letter must be received at Career Link by not later than 5:00 PM on Friday, November 19, 2021. The email should be sent to dvaughn@careerlink16.com.
- Bidder's Conference: There will not be a Bidder's Conference
- Limitations: This application process does not commit Career Link to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal to this request, or to procure or contract for services or supplies.
- Questions: Questions should be addressed only to David Vaughn, Technical Specialist/Planner, at dvaughn@careerlink16.com.
- Evaluation and Review: Applications will be evaluated according to the criteria attached in this packet and only in accordance with the written material submitted by the applicant. A committee will rate the proposals.
- Funds Available: Up to \$150,000 per initial contract.
- Contract Terms: Contracts will be entered into with successful bidders for a one-year period with options to renew the contract for two additional years. See additional explanation in the body of this RFP.
- Signature: The proposal must contain a cover letter with the signature of the authorized individual requesting consideration for funding provided by Adobe PDF email.

Definitions

Applicant	An organization which is applying for funds to deliver the program described in this Application for Funding (bidder).
Career Link	Public name for the United Workforce Development Board.
Career Planner	Formally known as a Case Manager.
Certified / Certification Date	The date recorded in the statewide IWDS system that signifies that the customer has met all eligibility requirements for a particular Title of funding. The customer's file is certified and Service lines are opened.
Exit / Exit Date	The date a participant's Services have ended. However, a customer may be enrolled in a Follow-up Service for one calendar year after Exit.
IWDS	The Illinois Workforce Development System is a statewide database that tracks information about each participant.
Performance Standards	A set of goals established in concert with Career Link, the State of Illinois and the federal Department of Labor.
Program Operator or Service Provider	Once an applicant has been accepted for funding, they are now identified as a Program Operator or Service Provider. Any awarded contracts will explain your responsibilities as a sub-recipient of federal funding.
United Workforce Development Board	Legal name of the organization releasing this Application for Funding. Also known as Career Link.
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is the governing legislation which controls Career Link.
Workforce Innovation Board (WIB)	The governing Board of Career Link as established by WIOA.

Statement of Work

Requesting Organization Information

The United Workforce Development Board a.k.a. Career Link is a private non-profit corporation that administers federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds in an eight county region in central Illinois. The counties in the region are Fulton, Marshall, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford.

Background

Career Link administers a source of funding designated specifically for low-income adults (defined as at least 18 years of age). A portion of these funds has been set aside for persons who are ex-offenders re-entering society after incarceration and need assistance transitioning to employment.

Career Link currently funds On-the-Job Training (OJT) for WIOA-eligible adults in high-growth occupations at local employers. OJT assistance reimburses employers a percentage of an eligible new hire's wages during a customized training period. OJT provides employers with a way to have new employees gain specific skills and employment competencies. This is accomplished through exposure in an actual work setting to the processes, work tasks, tools and methods of a specific job or group of jobs. Through this service, businesses may be reimbursed up to 75% of the new employee's wages (no overtime) for up to six (6) months of training.

Statement of Need

Re-entry programs and are designed to help returning citizens successfully "re-enter" society following their incarceration, thereby reducing recidivism, improving public safety, and saving money. Nationally, two out of every three people released from state prisons are rearrested for a new offense and about half are re-incarcerated within three years. Reducing recidivism is critical for increasing long-term public safety and lowering corrections costs. Individuals who have been incarcerated can expect their future earnings to be reduced by about 40 percent after they return to their communities. Re-entry efforts seek to reduce barriers to employment so that people with past criminal involvement – after they have been held accountable and paid their dues – can compete for work opportunities. Education is a core resource for release preparation, and is an evidence-based tool for reducing recidivism among adults and juveniles. Education is a critical building block for increasing employment opportunities. Stable housing with appropriate supportive services is a key factor in preventing homelessness and reducing recidivism. The goal is to reduce barriers to public and subsidized housing, and advance promising models that improve outcomes for people who repeatedly use corrections and homeless services.

Program Design

Career Link is seeking an organization to operate an adult re-entry program in Region 15 that assists ex-offenders in successfully completing life skills training and transitioning to employment through On-the-Job Training (OJT). Career Link is seeking an organization(s) that can provide these services in the most effective and cost efficient manner. Service Providers will design a program that assists ex-offenders with their transition to civilian life and prepares them for employment. Service Providers will establish partnerships with local businesses willing to hire ex-offenders in career pathway occupations. Ideally, upon successful completion of the Service Provider's program, participants will be hired by the business partners utilizing Career Link's On-the-Job Training assistance.

The purpose of this program is to decrease the recidivism rate of ex-offenders in central Illinois. To this end, there are four basic objectives for individuals enrolled in this program. The participants should:

1. Successfully complete program training courses;
2. Enter employment or post-secondary training; and
3. Maintain employment for at least 12 months after exit.
4. Participate in a 12-month Follow-up period after completion of OJT contract.

The target goal for enrollment into the program is at least 15 individuals.

Eligibility for Services

To participate in services funded through this program, an individual must meet WIOA eligibility requirements. Applicant eligibility must be completed and certified by Career Link staff before enrollment into the program. Individuals should attend several sessions and demonstrate a commitment to the program before they can be enrolled in WIOA program performance. Incentives cannot be paid to participants until after they are certified by Career Link staff. WIOA funds cannot be used to support the training of participants that are not fully certified.

Required Program Elements

The manner in which each element is delivered is not pre-determined, but should be described in the Response Section.

1. The program must provide Life Skills Training for the participants, including interpersonal communication skills, essential employability skills, adaptability, and multicultural sensitivity/awareness.
2. The program must provide information in job readiness skills and job search techniques in order to enhance the participants' ability to obtain employment.

3. The program must include a financial education component. This component should include instruction on basic budgeting methods, financial wellness, building credit, and home ownership.
4. The program must include an on-the-job training employment component. Program providers should establish partnerships with local employers willing to hire participants. The job positions should be full-time, permanent positions that pay a household-sustaining wage. Ideally, the employment opportunities would offer career pathways to the individuals to progress in their occupational fields. As stated above, OJT assistance may reimburse these employers up to 75% of the new employee's regular wages (no overtime) for up to six (6) months of training. Department of Labor and locally-established self-sufficiency rates will be considered when determining the appropriateness of projected salaries. No OJT assistance can be paid without prior approval. Career Link will be responsible for developing any OJT contracts. Costs associated with these activities are not part of the Service Provider's budget or contract. These costs will be paid directly by Career Link.
5. The program must include a case management component to support the participants throughout the entire program. Case Managers should develop a customized Individual Employment Plan for each participant based on a thorough assessment of the individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities.
6. Optional mentoring component: The program may include a mentoring component. The expectation is that the mentors would provide professional support and guidance to the student. In the course of meeting with the students, the mentor may become aware of some previously unknown barriers that the student is facing. The mentor is expected to be familiar with additional resources to help address these barriers. The majority of interactions with the students is expected to be in person, but email or text messaging are other communication options.

Incentives

The program provider should develop an Incentive Plan to incentivize the participants to achieve benchmarks as they participate in life skills training, participate in on-the-job training, and enter employment. For example, an incentive may be the award of a bus pass or \$50 gift card upon completion of benchmarks such as attending three (3) consecutive Life Skills Training sessions. There may be other benchmarks, which the bidder may suggest. In all cases, the achievement of these benchmarks must be documented. Possible incentives include pre-paid gas cards, bus tokens/passes, and Walmart gift cards. Incentive gift cards are limited to gas stations, department stores or general (Amazon, VISA cards, etc.). The bidder may use these suggestions or propose other types of incentives. Incentives may total approximately \$400 per participant per program year. Once a participant has completed training and is no longer receiving services, the participant is

“exited.” Incentives may only be provided to participants prior to their exiting the program. These items should be included in the budget. These incentives must be awarded in a timely manner as the participants earn the incentives. Incentives must be awarded throughout the year and may not be withheld from participants until completion of the program.

General Parameters and Requirements

The Service Provider will be responsible for making an initial identification of appropriate participants. Career Link staff will assess individuals referred by the Service Provider and determine their WIOA eligibility. The Career Link staff will examine the barriers and suitability of the individuals to participate successfully in the re-entry program as well as meeting the general eligibility requirements. Additional information will be provided to the Service Provider to assist them in making the initial identification.

Due to the roles of the Service Provider and Career Link staff, communication and cooperation will be very critical to the success of the program. On-going and frequent communication will be required. Service Providers will be required to submit quarterly estimates of their expenditures and planned enrollments to Career Link.

Each participant must have a follow-up period of one year. It is largely the responsibility of the Service Provider to perform follow-up on participants in partnership with Career Link. Career Link will also provide guidance in this element of the program. A full-year of follow-up should be planned for all enrolled participants after their exit from the program.

Career Link cannot pay for any service or activity that is already provided by another organization as long as that service is reasonably available to Career Link clients. Any activity that is reimbursed by Career Link must be **new, additional or unique**. Combining instruction to Career Link participants with non-Career Link participants is discouraged due to the problems created in segregating costs.

The Service Provider will be monitored for compliance with the terms of the contract by Career Link and, possibly, Monitors from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Some supportive services will be available to the participants, such as childcare, transportation allowance and emergency needs. These supportive services will be arranged and paid for directly by Career Link unless other arrangement are established with the Provider.

Performance Outcomes

The applicant will be required to specify an expected minimum performance level that meets or exceeds the following standards:

1. Success rate for completing Life Skills Training – 72%

2. Success rate for employment – 74%

The above goals are suggestive of what it is believed are achievable minimum goals. Experience may determine that these goals are either too low or too high. A participant may be terminated from the program even if only one goal is met or if no further progress is thought possible. The overall goal, however, is for the participant to achieve both goals.

Application

Applicant Format and Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit 1) a PDF of a signed Letter of Application and 2) an Application Proposal, including a Budget Table and Incentive Table, in one Microsoft Word document. Use the Budget Table and Incentive Table templates (Attachments A & B) in your proposal. The categories or line items in both the Budget Table and Incentive Table templates are just examples and are not required for application. The Application Proposal must address the Required Elements identified in this RFP. The Proposal should also address the concerns listed in the Ratings Guide (Attachment D). The Budget Table must include calculations and identify the program staff and the percentage of their salaries to be requested. The Incentive Table must describe all participant incentives and calculations.

Funding

The applicant may request funds for expenses that are necessary, reasonable and allocable to the program under the guidelines of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. No funds may be used to duplicate or provide services that are already available and currently provided.

Initial contract awards are limited to \$150,000; however, budget increases and adjustments may occur during the contract if Career Link determines it is necessary and reasonable.

Allowable expenses could include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Instructional staff salaries and fringe benefits (preparatory time can be reimbursed)
2. Supplies, instructional materials
3. Travel
4. Facility rental
5. Participant Incentives
6. Participant travel
7. Conference costs if appropriate and connected with this program

The applicant cannot purchase equipment without permission from Career Link. Such purchases are generally discouraged.

Any contract between Career Link and the applicant will be a cost reimbursement type wherein the applicant will be reimbursed monthly on the submission of a bill, detailing the costs incurred during the preceding month, which are properly chargeable to the contract.

General Provisions

Each sub-recipient/sub-contractor will be monitored at least once a year to assure that the program is being delivered in accordance with the terms of this RFP and the subsequent contract.

Invoices must be submitted monthly and in a timely manner. Failure to invoice on time may result in the issuance of a corrective action request and ultimately with the cancellation of the contract.

Sub-recipients/ sub-contractors must have:

- a financial management system in place to track and record grant expenditures (i.e., QuickBooks, Sage MIP);
- oversight provided by a Board;
- registered at Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) and System for Award Management (SAM) websites, and;
- not been debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs or activities.

Equal Opportunity/Non-Discrimination

The Service Provider must abide by the following policies which promote fair hiring, promotion and recruiting practices in all job classifications in order to achieve equality in employment by complying with the non-discrimination and non-sectarian activities and provision under Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act, as well as abide by the following federal/state laws and regulations for EO/Non-discrimination:

Executive Order 11246;

Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended;

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975;

Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended;

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended;

U.S. Department of Labor Regulations at 29 CFR Part 37;

The Illinois Human Rights Act, as amended;

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;

The Equal Pay Act of 1963;

The affirmative action provisions of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistant Act of 1974;

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967; and

The anti-discrimination provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Review Process

The Local Workforce Innovation Board has authorized Career Link to release this Request for Proposal, score the resulting proposals according to the criteria attached and, based on those scores, award contracts. Contract(s) will be offered to the applicants in order of rating, taking into consideration the availability of funds and the goal to adult re-entry services in each of our counties.

Response Items

The ability of the review committee to understand clearly what the applicant intends to provide will be a key factor in awarding funds for this project. *All responses must be typed.* The signed Letter of Application must be sent as a PDF document. All other information must be sent in one Microsoft Word document. Use as much space as necessary for each item, keeping the items in the same order and clearly numbering the heading for each response to match the order of the Applicant Information and Required Elements.

Letter of Application/Bid

Provide a Letter of Application, signed by the person in your organization who has the authority to bind the organization to a contract. In the Letter of Application, state that the organization is submitting an Application and will be able to enter into a contract if so selected. This signed letter must be sent as a PDF document.

Application Proposal

The Application Proposal should include responses to the criteria listed below, numbered to match the order of the Applicant Information and Required Program Elements.

Applicant Information

1. Name, Address, Telephone Number, FEIN and DUNS of applicant
2. Name and title of highest ranking staff in your organization
3. Contact Person (if different than 2.) including name, telephone number and email address
4. Identify the financial management system in place to track and record grant expenditures (i.e., QuickBooks, Sage MIP).
5. Brief history of your organization, its mission, accomplishments, staffing, and similar information.

Required Application Information

Describe how *each* required program element will be delivered in your Application Proposal.

1. Who will provide the element (see Required Program Elements, page 4)?
2. Where will the element be provided? Also, describe the specific geographic area your organization serves.
3. Discuss the timelines for each element. Will they be open entry - open exit; set entry - open exit; set entry - set exit?
4. How long is each element anticipated to take?
5. Maximum number of participants per group or in the class? Will you do more than one group in a yearly cycle? If so, how many?
6. Number of instructors or other staff?
7. Describe the topical areas that will be covered in each of the Required Program Elements.
8. Identify any specific types of instructional materials that will be used.
9. Describe the provision of Career Exploration, Job Readiness Skills and Job Search Techniques.
10. Insert your completed Incentive Table (see template in Attachments) and describe the incentive plan.
11. Will the bidder be able to make payments directly to the participants for incentives?
12. Employment Component: Describe who the employer(s) is/are, location, job types, full or part-time or both and typical salary range. How will the participants be connected to the employer(s)? Describe the strategy and technique that will be used to transition the participant to employment.
13. Non-Duplication: Describe and explain how the reimbursable elements in your proposal do not duplicate existing programs.
14. Communication: Provide an assurance that Service Provider staff will be available for communication with the staff of Career Link and the importance of this communication.
15. Follow-up: Provide an assurance that the Service Provider understands the responsibility for the follow-up activity and the requirement to provide any known information on the status of the participants following completion of the program.

It is largely the responsibility of the Service Provider to perform follow-up on participants. A full-year of follow-up should be planned for all enrolled participants.

16. Recruitment: Describe the procedure and approach that will be taken to identify and obtain participation. Describe your understanding of the qualifiers for participation. Provide an assurance that it is understood that selection will require the determination of eligibility and suitability by Career Link staff before services can be delivered.
17. Staffing: Describe the number and types of individuals who will be charged to the project. Describe whether these positions are new or re-assignment of existing staff. Describe the qualifications and experience of existing staff or qualifications for hiring new staff.
18. Insert your completed Budget Table (see template in Attachments). Describe the costs chargeable to the program. Describe the type of cost (salary, fringe benefits, facility rent, etc.) and how the cost was arrived at. If any costs are shared costs, indicate the basis of how the Career Link share will be determined. Awards will be dependent on total funding available. Proposals up to \$150,000 will be accepted; however, the raters will be considering the cost effectiveness of each proposal in order to provide services throughout the region.
19. Provide an Assurance of compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity laws.
20. Provide any additional information that you believe is relevant.

Appendix

Budget Table

ITEM	RATIONALE AND COST SHARING	AMOUNT
Coordinator Salary	__ hours per week at \$____/hour for __ weeks [Name and Staff - % of salary attributed to grant]	
Coordinator Benefits	Benefits (\$__) and retirement system (\$__) [Name and Staff - % of benefits attributed to grant]	
Instructional Supplies and Materials	\$__ per participant to cover textbooks and materials, assuming __ participants	
Participant Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - __ incentives valued at \$__ each= \$__ - __ gift cards valued at \$__ each= \$__ - __ incentives valued at \$__ each for participants who enter post-secondary or the workplace= \$__ 	
Facilities	__ per day in classroom for __ days per week. Fall semester = __ weeks and spring semester = __ weeks.	
TOTAL:		\$

Additional budget description:

Incentive Table

ACTIVITY	INCENTIVE AMOUNT	MAX ALLOWED
Completion of Assessment, Interest Testing, etc.	\$__	
Complete 4 volunteer hours	\$__	
Participate in 7 hours orientation sessions	\$__ Part 1 pre-employment; \$__ Part 2 during employment	
Complete a resume	\$__	
Job Coach Discretionary Award	\$__ per issue/max __ issues for exemplary work ethic	
Job Search with assistance	\$__ per session; max __	
Obtain Employment	\$__; max __	
TOTAL PER PARTICIPANT:		\$

Additional incentive plan description:

Attachment C

Proposal Rating Guide

Adult Re-Entry Program - 2021

Bidder _____

CRITERIA	Possible Points	Points Assigned
1. To what degree does the applicant describe an organization capable of providing the requested program including adequate staff?	5	
2. To what degree has the applicant described a program that matches the requested requirements listed in the Application for Funding document and described a program, approach and structure which promises success in meeting the goals of the program?	30	
3. Has the applicant added the optional mentoring component and described an effective approach to successfully guiding participants?	5	
4. Is there an adequate explanation of the funding level requested and is the funding request cost effective in comparison with the time allocated for the project?	15	
5. Does the applicant provide a comprehensive Incentive Plan designed to motivate the participant to succeed?	10	
6. Does the applicant have experience in successfully administering similar programs?	10	
7. Has the applicant provided the necessary Equal Opportunity assurances?	0 or 5	
8. Is the organization owned by a female or minority?	0 or 5	
TOTAL	85	

Rater _____

Date _____