



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
for
SHORT-TERM, PREVOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES
Issued by

Workforce Solutions South Plains

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Continuous Open Enrollment

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I. Introduction

The South Plains Regional Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions South Plains, (hereinafter, "the Board" or "Workforce Solutions") is a 501C3 non-profit corporation that administers workforce development services authorized by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) for the 15-county South Plains Regional Workforce Development Area (SPRWDA). The Board's service area consists of Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, King, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry and Yoakum Counties. The Board enters into agreements with workforce system operators and training providers for the delivery of necessary workforce development services. Among the services provided are group and individual activities designed to improve the employability and earnings capability of program participants. The Board maintains five full-service Workforce Solutions Career Centers¹ and three satellite offices located throughout the 15-county South Plains Region.

Through this Request for Applications (RFA), the Board is soliciting applications from providers of short-term pre-vocational training services allowable under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) and other federal programs operated by Workforce Solutions South Plains.

II. Statement of Work

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this RFA is to compile a list of approved vendors of allowable training services that target adult or dislocated workers and:

- ❖ enhance the participant's opportunity to obtain employment by establishing fundamental skills;
- ❖ promote job retention that leads to increased earnings and self-sufficiency; and,
- ❖ promote career progression.

As a result of this RFA, the Board will compile and maintain a list of approved vendors of short-term pre-vocational training for use by Workforce Solutions Career Centers. Program participants who are in need of individualized career services in order to upgrade their skills or complete or enhance their educational goals in order to secure or retain employment will be referred to approved vendors for appropriate services as needed. The Workforce Solutions Career Counselors will follow the participant's progress throughout the activity.

Providers may offer one or more service offerings and must complete the requested application form (Attachment 1) for each course or program offered. A description of allowable training services is provided in this RFA.

2. Eligible Providers:

Eligible providers include public or private, faith-based, and community-based organizations, school districts, colleges, and universities. Entities that are subject to the Texas Proprietary School Laws or other State regulatory requirements must be in compliance with applicable laws to be eligible. Minority-owned, disadvantaged and woman-owned businesses are encouraged to respond. Service providers must have at least one year of demonstrated performance in the provision of the types of services offered.

¹ See the Workforce Solutions South Plains website at <http://www.spworkforce.org> for Workforce Solutions Career Center locations.

Applications submitted in response to this RFA will be evaluated on an established point system and successful providers meeting the minimum requirements will become approved vendors. See section entitled, "Evaluation".

3. Type of Agreement:

An agreement will be established with each approved vendor based on reimbursable fixed unit cost amounts stated in the response to this RFA. Total reimbursement amounts will be based on actual Workforce Solutions Career Center referrals and funding availability. Workforce Solutions does not guarantee the referral of any participant to any selected provider. Participants will be given a choice of service provider based on need, availability and proximity to their community.

Once approved, agreements will be effective for a period of one year. Agreements will be evaluated on a yearly basis for compliance with RFA specifications and may be renewed annually based upon successful attainment of performance standards and availability of funds. Workforce Solutions reserves the right to cease referrals of participants if the vendor does not demonstrate that participants are mastering the intended skills.

4. Contracts:

Prior to the provision of services, contracts will be executed between the service provider and Workforce Solutions based on the cost per participant. These contracts will incorporate this RFA and its provisions by reference and will incorporate the information on service offerings as described in the Attachment 1, "Provider Application", submitted by respondents to this RFA. Contracts will include any additional provisions regarding reporting requirements, payment and performance necessary to ensure the welfare of participants.

Providers may submit invoices upon completion of services as called for in each individual contract. Payments will be made to the service provider by Workforce Solutions within 30 days of invoice date.

5. Program Requirements:

Programs must not duplicate services which already exist within the service area free of charge to the general public. If programs and services are available to the general public, the cost to the public must not be less than the cost charged to Workforce Solutions participants.

The duration of training must be no longer than 6 months to be considered for approval. Courses should cost no more than \$1,000 per course.

6. Service Offerings:

Short-term prevocational services include training courses, services or activities that promote the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, in order to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.

Short-term, prevocational services include, but are not limited to:

- Development of learning skills,
- Communication skills,
- Interviewing skills,
- Punctuality,
- Personal maintenance skills,
- Professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.

7. Evaluation:

Workforce Solutions monitors the delivery of Workforce development services on an ongoing basis in order to ensure the achievement of program goals. The core indicators of performance for employment and training activities authorized under the WIOA include:

- ❖ Entry into unsubsidized employment;
- ❖ Retention in unsubsidized employment 6 months after entry into the employment
- ❖ Earnings received in unsubsidized employment after entry into the employment
- ❖ Attainment of a recognized credential relating to achievement of educational skills, which may include attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or occupational skills, by participants who enter unsubsidized employment, or by participants who are eligible youth age 16 through 24 who enter postsecondary education, advanced training, or unsubsidized employment.

Short-term prevocational training services will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine the contribution made to the overall goals of the Workforce Solutions program. In addition, customer satisfaction with particular service offerings may be measured through surveys conducted after the conclusion of participation in the program, course or activity.

Agreements entered into with service providers will incorporate measurable standards and objective assessment methods by which performance outcomes will be evaluated. Providers are asked to include this information as part of the Provider Application submitted in response to this RFA.

Results of an individual participant's performance evaluations are to be provided to Workforce Solutions at completion of training or upon request. Specific reporting requirements will be included as part of any contract executed as a result of this RFA.

III. Selection of Service Providers

1. Application Selection Process

Successful respondents to this RFA will be placed on an approved Vendor's List in order to receive individual referrals for services and will enter into a written agreement for a one-year period. Workforce Solutions does not guarantee the referral of any participants to any selected provider. The following considerations apply to the selection process:

- a. Only applications that are responsive to the RFA instructions (i.e. include all required components) will be considered.
- b. Workforce Solutions will base selection on the application evaluation criteria outlined below.
- c. Workforce Solutions will make a good faith effort to award contracts to Historically Underutilized Business (HUB's). It is the policy of this organization to pursue HUB business. However the final decision as to the award of this contract will be contingent upon weighted evaluation criteria.

2. Application Evaluation Criteria

The review and selection process will include the following criteria and value system:

Demonstrated Performance – 30 Points

This criterion examines the past experience and demonstrated effectiveness (competence and qualifications) in providing the proposed educational or training service in a timely manner. Professional recommendations from reliable sources and/or an onsite review may be required.

Program Design – 30 Points

This criterion examines the quality and innovativeness of the program activity and the outcomes desired, as well as whether program activities are consistent with the eligible activities as described in the section, "Program Requirements", and the section, "Service Offerings". Quality programs will provide services and/or activities that assist Workforce Solutions in attaining mandated performance measures on the core indicators of performance as described in the section entitled, "Evaluation".

If applicable, applications will be evaluated on the innovative method the organization will employ to coordinate proposed services with other providers in the community based on existing service gaps or overlaps to ensure that there is no duplication of services. For those providers that propose to offer services already available in the community, the provider must demonstrate that the service or activity is either directed at a special population, or provided in an area that does not currently offer these services.

Reasonableness of Cost – 20 Points

This criterion examines the cost of services to be provided. The costs for services must be reasonable and in line with the stated maximum cost of \$1,000 per student per course.

Financial Stability – 20 Points

This criterion examines whether the selected provider has adequate financial resources to achieve contract performance requirements. The application will be reviewed carefully for evidence of the bidder's ability to account for funds in accordance with TWC fiscal requirements. Training providers whose programs are regulated by the Texas Higher Education Board or the Texas Workforce Commission Career Schools and Colleges Division are not required to submit financial information.

3. Scoring Threshold

Any application with a total score of less than 70 points will be considered as non-responsive and will be disqualified from further consideration.

4. Debriefing

Workforce Solutions will provide a debriefing for bidders scoring below a 70 upon request. The purpose of the debriefing is to promote the exchange of information, explain the evaluation system, and help unsuccessful bidders understand why they were not selected. Debriefings serve an important educational function for new providers of Workforce services. A fundamental objective is to aid these new providers in improving the quality of any future applications. In the debriefing, Workforce Solutions will provide information on the procurement process and how the provider's application was scored.

Providers who desire a debriefing must submit their request in writing, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the mailing date of determination/notification of non-selection, and include the party's proper mailing address. Workforce Solutions will acknowledge receipt of the request for debriefing in writing within 5 business days of receipt and provide notification of the date and time of the scheduled debriefing which shall be scheduled as soon as possible, but will no later than 10 business days of receipt of the request.

IV. Submission of Applications

This RFA is open and continuous and applications may be submitted beginning February 2, 2016.

Workforce Solutions will issue written notification of selection for inclusion on the Approved Vendor list, or of non-selection, within 30 days of the date of receipt of the application by Workforce Solutions. Successful respondents will be placed on the Workforce Solutions Short-term Prevocational Services Approved Vendor list for the applicable Program Year - effective as of the date of approval - for a period not to exceed twelve months from the date of placement on the list.

Questions about the RFA may be sent via fax to: Maria Keenmon at (806) 744-1987 or email to: maria.keenmon@spworkforce.org. Two copies with original signatures of each application must be submitted to Workforce Solutions at the address below. In addition to the two hard copies, submission of the application electronically (via email) can expedite the review process and is encouraged.

Applications shall be submitted to:
By Mail or Hand Delivery

Workforce Solutions South Plains
Attention: Maria Keenmon
1301 Broadway, Ste. 201
Lubbock, Texas 79401

Submit two original, signed copies of the Application form (Exhibit A) for each proposed program or service offering. In order to expedite the review process, you may submit an additional copy via email to maria.keenmon@spworkforce.org.

Governing Provisions and Limitations

1. Offerors shall not, under penalty of law, offer or provide any gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value to any officer, board member, employee, proposal evaluator, or agent of the Board or elected official for purposes of having an influencing effect on this procurement. Offerors shall not attempt in any manner to advocate for, lobby or otherwise attempt to influence any officer, board member, employee, proposal evaluator, or agent of the Board or elected official for purposes of having an influencing effect on this procurement.
2. No officer, board member, employee, proposal evaluator, or agent of the Board shall participate in the selection, award or administration of a contract supported by workforce development funds if a conflict of interest, or potential conflict, is involved.
3. Offerors shall not engage in any activity that will restrict or eliminate competition. Violation of this provision may cause an offeror's proposal to be disqualified and rejected. This does not preclude joint ventures or subcontracts.
4. All proposals submitted must be an original work product of the offeror. The copying, paraphrasing or other use of substantial portions of the work product of another party and submitted hereunder as original work of the offeror is not permitted. Failure to adhere to this instruction may cause the proposal to be disqualified and rejected.
5. The contents of a successful proposal may become a contractual obligation if selected for the award of a contract. Failure of an offeror to accept this obligation may result in cancellation of an award. No plea of error or mistake shall be available to successful offerors as a basis for release from proposed services at the stated price/cost. Any damages accruing to the Board as a result of a successful offeror's failure to contract may be recovered from the offeror.
6. The Board reserves the right to:
 - a. award from one or more contracts as a result of this RFA for any combination of services as necessary to obtain the best value for the State;
 - b. accept or reject any or all proposals received, to cancel or reissue this RFA in part, or its entirety;
 - c. extend, shorten, increase or decrease any contract awarded as a result of this RFA;
 - d. contact any individual, agency, employer or granting agencies listed in a proposal, contact others who may have experience and/or knowledge of the offeror's relevant performance and/or qualifications;
 - e. request additional information from any and all offerors to obtain clarification of or explanation for any aspect of a response to this RFA;
 - f. waive any defect in this procurement process or to correct any error(s) and/or make changes to this solicitation it deems necessary;
 - g. negotiate the final terms of any and all contracts or agreements with selected offerors and any such terms negotiated as a result of this RFA may be renegotiated and/or amended in order to successfully meet the needs of the South Plains Area;
 - h. conduct on-site reviews of records, systems, procedures, including credit and criminal background checks, etc., of any entity selected for funding under this RFA either before or after the award of a contract or agreement;
 - i. cancel any contract or agreement awarded if there is found to be misrepresentation of the offeror's ability to perform as stated in the offeror's proposal.
7. Offers must be valid for a period of 90 days following the date and time designated for receipt of proposals, and may not be withdrawn or canceled during that period without the written permission of the Board. A statement to this effect must be submitted with the offeror's proposal.
8. The offeror assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws:
 - a. Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which prohibit discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I—financially assisted program or activity;

- b. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin;
 - c. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
 - d. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and
 - e. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.
 - f. The offeror also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the offeror's operation of the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the offeror makes to carry out the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The offeror understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.
9. An offeror may withdraw his proposal either in person or by written request by a duly authorized representative at any time prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of applications.
 10. Funding for goods or services requested in this RFA is contingent upon the Board's actual receipt and availability of funds from the Texas Workforce Commission.
 11. Workforce Solutions South Plains is an equal opportunity employer and complies fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which prohibit discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I- financially assisted program or activity; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.
 12. Contracts will contain a section prohibiting sectarian involvement, and the Board will ensure that no funds under the contract are used, either directly or indirectly, in the support of any religious or anti-religious activity, worship or instruction.
 13. Contracts will contain a provision that no participant is directly or indirectly charged a fee as a condition for participation in any TWC funded program.
 14. The offeror certifies that the individual or organization submitting the quote is not ineligible, pursuant to Texas Family Code §231.006, to receive the specified payment and acknowledges that if the certification is inaccurate, no contract will be made with offeror.
 15. The offeror certifies and assures that it has not been found guilty of unfair business practices in a judicial or state agency administrative proceeding during the preceding year. The offeror further certifies and assures that no officer of the offeror has served as an officer of any company found guilty of unfair business practices in a judicial or state agency administrative proceeding during the preceding year.
 16. The offeror certifies that it will disclose to the Board and any applicable federal or state agencies the name of any person who has an ownership or control interest in or is an agent or managing employee of the offeror who has been convicted of a criminal offense related to the person's involvement in any program under Title XVIII, SIX, or SS of the Social Security Act since the inception of these programs.
 17. The offeror certifies that it will notify the Board immediately in the event of any significant change affecting the offeror and offeror's identity, such as ownership or control, name change, governing board membership and vendor identification number.
 18. The offeror certifies that it will comply with the requirements of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 regarding employment verification and retention of verification forms for any individuals hired on or after November 1, 1986, who will perform any services under the proposed contract.