



Request for Proposals One-Stop Operator for Bradford and Tioga Counties

Purpose

The Northern Tier Workforce Development Board (NTWDB), as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) is seeking proposals for the One-Stop Operator for the comprehensive PA CareerLink® centers in the Northern Tier Region either individually or jointly for the following centers:

PA CareerLink® Bradford/Sullivan counties located at 312 Main Street, Towanda, PA 18848

PA CareerLink® Tioga county located at 56 Plaza Lane, Wellsboro, PA 16933

The PA CareerLink® centers, also known as American Job Centers, provide career services in accordance with WIOA to jobseekers and employers. The board will select a single-entity operator in which the entity selected as the system operator elects to, or is required to, employ a single individual or a group of individuals to carryout, in whole or in part, the onsite functions of the operator. This model allows the NTWDB to procure an eligible entity to serve as the operator; whereas, whichever entity is procured will be required to maintain a role and function for the current PA CareerLink® Site Administrator. The operator may operate more than one PA CareerLink® service location or there may be multiple operators in a local workforce development area.

This RFP is in accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 15-16, Workforce System Policy No. 121-04, February 27, 2017, Financial Management Guide, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Background

The WIOA was passed in July of 2014, replacing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) which had been the primary federal workforce development law. Inherent in the new legislation is improved and seamless service delivery for both employers and job seekers through greater alignment of education, economic development, and workforce systems and resources. WIOA calls for the continuation of the existing service delivery structure, the nation's network of one-stop career centers. In Pennsylvania they are known as PA CareerLink®.

Northern Tier Profile

The Northern Tier Workforce Development Area is a 4,000-square-mile rural area located in northcentral Pennsylvania which includes Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming Counties. With approximately 173,000 residents, Northern Tier has a low population density. Area residents live in small communities spread over large tracts of agricultural land and forests. The rural nature of our region presents challenges, but it also provides a good quality of life and strong sense of community. With the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) requiring greater services to those individuals with barriers to employment and concurrently greater services to employers and their sectors, the analysis of regional labor market data is critical to the success of the Northern Tier Workforce Development Area and the Commonwealth.

There are two PA CareerLink® comprehensive centers in the Northern Tier. PA CareerLink® Affiliate sites are located in Sullivan, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties and fall under the umbrella of the Bradford/Sullivan PA CareerLink®. These sites are strategically located in areas for individuals that cannot realistically travel to a comprehensive site due the distance. These affiliate sites are operated by the Title I provider that provides service in each respective county.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible entities that may apply include:

- Community-Based Organization
- Employment Service State agencies under the Wagner-Peyser Act
- A for-profit entity
- A government agency
- Indian Tribes or Tribal Organizations
- An institution of higher education
- An interested institution capable of carrying out duties of the operator
- A non-profit organization
- A nontraditional public secondary school
- A workforce intermediary

The Operator will be accountable to the NTWDB and the Chief Local Elected Officials of the Northern Tier. Performance and accountability will be determined utilizing data driven decisions and customers satisfaction.

The NTWDB has an established a PA CareerLink® system standing committee. This committee will provide information, recommendations, and assistance with planning, implementation, evaluation, and oversight, as well as other issues related to PA CareerLink® operations. The local board will ensure appropriate internal controls and conflict of interest policies and procedures are in place.

Required Applicant Qualifications

The selected Operator must have knowledge and understanding of WIOA, applicable federal and state regulations, PA Department of Labor & Industry policies and the region’s WIOA local and regional plans. The Operator will have a proven record of performance in the supervision of facility oversight, managing and developing staff and partnerships. The NTWDB envisions the PA CareerLink® centers as the primary resource for employers looking for skilled workers and jobseekers looking to enter or re-enter the workforce. The Operator is expected to develop innovative outreach strategies to attract and serve customers.

Operator Roles

The PA CareerLink® Operator is required to coordinate the delivery of partner services to ensure a seamless distribution of career services, training services and other employment-related services provided by both required and additional partner programs. The operator is charged with the functional supervision of the one-stop locations. This supervisory role will be referred to as the Site Administrator. The successful proposer will be the employer of record for the PA CareerLink® Site Administrator.

In a case where the successful proposer also is the operator of programs in either of the PA CareerLink® sites, a division of responsibilities must be delineated. Essentially, there may be no actual or implied administrative supervisory relationship between the PA CareerLink® Administrator and other program staff.

The NTWDB reserves the right to reject any candidate for the position of the PA CareerLink® Administrator the successful proposer may propose/select. The PA CareerLink® Administrator must have a comprehensive knowledge of WIOA and all subsequent rules and regulations as well as Commonwealth policies that impact the one-stop in any way.

The operator is responsible for ensuring that on-going daily one-stop service operations are accomplished. Duties include, but are not limited to organizing and coordinating all co-located partner staff by function; establish customer flow model, develop operational procedures that promote effective, seamless service delivery, communicating workforce system policy, directions and information according to communication protocol, establishing policy and procedures.

Under the leadership of the NTWDB and guidance of the PA CareerLink® partners, the Operator is tasked with the coordination of service delivery of one-stop partners and related service providers in the region's workforce system. The NTWDB maintains flexibility in defining these roles and responsibilities of their respective operators. Selected operators are sub-recipients of a Federal Award and are required to follow Uniform Guidance. Per TEGL 15-16, the NTWDB and the operator must execute a legally binding agreement which may take the form of a written contract or another type of agreement, such as an MOU. The written agreement developed with the NTWDB and the Operator must clarify how the organization will carry out its responsibilities while demonstrating compliance with WIOA and corresponding regulations. The operator must fully comply with established internal controls and conflict of interest policies and procedures as specified in 20 CFR 679.430.

Duties of the one-stop operator include, but are not limited to support the following:

- Fiscal management and oversight of the PA CareerLink® One-Stop Operating Budgets in concert with the PA CareerLink® Site Administrators, NTWDB and NTRPDC which serves as the fiscal agent;
- Serve as an intermediary with all One-Stop partners;
- Knows and understands the parameters under which the partners provide services;
- Communicates strategic goals and objectives of the NTWDB;
- Seamless integration and availability of comprehensive services by the PA CareerLink partners;
- Oversight of performance management system relative to WIOA performance metrics
- Evaluation of customer needs and satisfaction
- Insures that an effective partner referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of individuals and the partners' performance; if appropriate, recommends referral mechanism criteria to service delivery system stakeholders,
- Acts as an ambassador for the one-stop system to the community,
- Assures compliance with the PA Department of Labor and Industry and NTWDB's one-stop center certification criteria which is essential for receipt of infrastructure funding,
- Tracks and implements the negotiated one-stop partner Memoranda of Understanding (MOU).
- Liaison with the NTWDB to include participation in the NTWDB and respective committee meetings;
- Marketing and outreach for the PA CareerLink® system to jobseekers, employers and the community;
- Recruitment of additional partners
- Professional development of PA CareerLink® staff
- Plans, directs, reviews and provides functional supervision of PA CareerLink® staff
- Communicates with education, economic development and community-based stakeholders
- Interacts with business community

Limitations

An operator may not perform the following functions:

- Manage or significantly participate in the competitive selection process for the operator
- Select or terminate the operator, career services and youth providers
- Develop and submit an operating budget for local activities but may provide financial records to the WDB
- Be responsible for oversight of itself or other operators
- Negotiate local and/or regional performance accountability measures
- Convene system stakeholders to assist in the development of WIOA plans
- Prepare and submit WIOA plans

Service Provision

The Operator may also be a service provider within the PA CareerLink delivery system. Pursuant to 20 DFR 378.625, the appropriate internal controls within the operator-service provider entity must be employed as well as specific policies and procedures at the LWDB level regarding oversight, monitoring and evaluations of performance must be followed. Additionally, an entity serving as a system operator, that also serves a different role within the one-stop delivery system, may perform some or all of these functions when it is acting in its other role, if it has established sufficient internal controls and conflict of interest policies and procedures.

Relationship of Operator to the NTWDB and PA CareerLink® Partners

The NTWDB will maintain a contractual relationship with the selected Operator and will provide ongoing policy guidance and strategic direction to ensure that the board's vision and performance expectations remain in the forefront and are addressed. The NTWDB is also responsible for performance monitoring and will perform periodic quantitative, qualitative and on-site reviews of Operator performance to ensure that expectations are being met.

Performance and Accountability

The NTWDB staff will assist the provision of accurate and timely data affording the Operator the ability to make data driven decisions to improve performance and customer and client satisfaction.

Contract Period

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022; with three one-year renewal options to not exceed June 30, 2025.

Funding Available

Please note, available funding is subject to change. All funding is contingent upon the availability of state and federal funds and the continued authorization of the WIOA activities in the Northern Tier. The NTWDB and PA CareerLink® partners agree to an operating budget for each comprehensive PA CareerLink® center annually. Operating budgets for the successful proposer have not yet been finalized for the PY21-22 program year. The Operating Budget for the current year (PY20-21) included approximately \$32,000 in shared costs to support the Operator/Site Administrator. The estimate of \$32,000 should be used to determine a budget for the purposes of this RFP. Funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Services will commence July 1, 2021.

It is expected that the Operator will leverage other funding in order to support its activities and ultimately improve the public workforce system for job seekers and employers. Funding for subsequent years of the contract will be determined on an annual basis and may increase or decrease based on the annual WIOA allocations.

Proposal Timeline and Submission

- Release of RFP: Friday, April 9, 2021

- Questions concerning this RFP should be emailed to fleming@northerntier.org. Questions will be accepted through close of business April 20, 2021. Answers to submitted questions will be provided electronically to those who submitted questions and posted to www.ntrpdc.org by April 22, 2021.
- Proposals are due Monday, May 3, 2021 by 4:00 PM.
- Proposal Review and selection will take place May 4-May 12
- Award of contract will be announced no later than June 1, 2021

Proposal Format

Title Page

- Identify proposer's name, address, telephone, contact person and email

Organizational Profile and Required Information

- Description of proposer's organization
- Demonstrate organization's eligibility to participate as the One-Stop Operator as described in Eligible Applicants;
- Proposer's identification number (EIN)
- Proposer's name, address, telephone and email of contact person

Proposal Narrative

- Address the mission and goals of your organization, identify your customers and services provided and your outreach strategies to reach your target clients;
- Address your experience with the workforce system and relationship with the region's PA CareerLink® sites.
- Address your organization's ability to serve as the one-stop operator and individual suited to serve as Site Administrator, if applicable
- Address your experience in working with employers to address their hiring needs;
- Strategies for coordinating PA CareerLink® service for jobseekers and employers;
- Describe how your organization is well-positioned to serve in the capacity as the one-stop operator, either through demonstrated success in the role of the one-stop operator or demonstrated success in a similar position or role

Proposal Budget

- Include a budget and justification that details the expenditure of the estimated \$32,000 as well as any leveraged non-WIOA Title I funding that may be used to support the one-stop operator. A separate budget must be prepared for each PA CareerLink® site. Budget should be based on one year of service.

[One Stop Operator Budget](#)

Proposal Submission

Submissions to this RFP will be accepted no later than 4:00 PM on Monday, May 3, 2021. Complete submissions must be sent electronically to Melissa Fleming at fleming@northerntier.org

Proposal Evaluation

The following criteria will be evaluated for this proposal:

- Proposer's understanding of the requirements of the Operator and the workforce system in the Northern Tier and demonstrated capabilities to carry out the duties of the Operator;
- Connection to the public workforce system including service jobseeker and employers and strategies for outreach to those with barriers to employment;
- Innovative strategies for coordinating services for jobseekers and employers
- Leveraged resources the proposer brings to the role of the Operator;

A subcommittee will review and rank the proposal independently and then meet to discuss rankings and prepare their recommendations. These recommendations will be presented to the Northern Tier Workforce Development Board for action. The recommendations of the NTWDB will be taken to the Northern Tier Executive Committee for final consideration.

Notification of Award

1. It is expected that a final decision selecting the successful proposer will be announced no later than June 1, 2021. Upon conclusion of negotiations with successful bidder, all bidders submitting a proposal in response to the RFP will be informed in writing via email.
2. Bidders not selected may file a Request for Debriefing which must occur within five days of receipt from award notification. After the debriefing, should they desire, the bidder may submit a letter of appeal. The appeal must be submitted within five working days from the date of the debriefing. The appeal must be addressed to :

Chairperson
Executive Committee
Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission
312 Main Street
Towanda, Pennsylvania 18848

Once received, the letter will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and a final decision rendered within ten working days.

NTRPDC is an equal opportunity employer.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.