

PARTNER WORK

The Workforce Development Board for the Pittsburgh Area

Request for Proposals

For the period of July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Potential for two subsequent option years for the periods of
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 and July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Transitional Jobs Program

Proposals Due:

May 4, 2018 at 5:00 PM

Partner4Work
650 Smithfield Street, Suite 2600
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

RFP Release Date:

April 2, 2018

Partner4Work (TRWIB, Inc.) is an equal opportunity employer.

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

Purpose of this RFP

Partner4Work has issued this Request for Proposals (RFP) for Transitional Jobs (TJ) programs for adults in Program Year 2018-19 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019) with the potential for two subsequent option years, beginning on July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2020. Proposals are being solicited for TJ activities serving individuals with chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history. We seek creative programs that focus on building a work history, supporting individuals in reattaching to the workplace, and providing meaningful work experience.

Why are transitional jobs important?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) prioritizes work-based training opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment. One of the tools developed to provide this training is the Transitional Jobs (TJ) program. TJ are time-limited paid work experiences that help individuals with chronic unemployment build a positive work history while developing necessary work attitudes, behaviors and habits. TJ effectively leverage principles of experiential learning to concurrently build soft skills and occupational skills, and are most effective when coupled with supportive and career services. Ultimately, these temporary, subsidized TJ help individuals secure and maintain unsubsidized employment and prepare for long-term success in the labor market.

How can you partner with us?

Transitional Jobs (TJ) programs can come in a variety of forms, including programs focused on a single occupation or sector, cohort-based programs that place teams of individuals in project-based environments, programs that develop transitional jobs for each participant in an ad-hoc manner, and in-house placement programs. Partner4Work encourages applicants to think strategically and innovatively about creating a program model that best meets the needs of job seekers and will lead to long-term success.

Target Population to be Served

Funds will be awarded to TJ programs that serve residents of Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh¹ who are WIOA-eligible Adults, according to the criteria provided below.

WIOA Adult Eligibility

Basic eligibility requirements include:

- be 18 years of age or older;
- be a citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the U.S.; and
- meet selective service registration requirements (males only).

Additionally, TJ participants must be chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history. Individuals with chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history are defined as those who:

- Have been unemployed for 13 weeks or longer;
- Were unemployed at least 26 of the past 52 weeks; or
- Have held three or more jobs in the past 52 weeks and are currently unemployed or underemployed.

More than 50% of individuals served through TJ programs must be veterans, recipients of public assistance, low income individuals, or individuals with basic skills deficiencies.²

¹ In Allegheny County, WIOA funding is designated for two distinct workforce areas – City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. For purposes of this RFP and any resulting contracts, City of Pittsburgh residents are not considered Allegheny County residents.

² “Basic skills deficient” individuals are those who are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.

Program Dates (all dates are subject to change)

Partner4Work intends to award one-year contracts that begin on July 1, 2018. Contracts will be renewable for additional one-year periods at the sole discretion of Partner4Work for up to two subsequent years, beginning on July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2020.

Anticipated Awards

Partner4Work plans to award approximately \$450,000 in funds for TJ programs for the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. Although we anticipate awarding multiple contracts, Partner4Work reserves the right to award one or no contracts. Past annual awards have ranged from \$50,000 to as much as \$210,000.

Who can apply?

Non-profits, for-profits, community-based organizations, educational institutions, trade associations or unions, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship organizations, and government institutions are welcome to apply. Those with experience managing quality workforce development programs, focused on local populations, similar to the model for Transitional Jobs described in this RFP, are preferred.

Fiscal agents: Organizations with an existing federal tax ID may serve as a fiscal and/or administrative agent for an unincorporated entity. If so, the proposal must clearly state the arrangement and include a letter signed by an authorized board member of the agent organization acknowledging the arrangement.

Program Requirements

Transitional jobs (TJ) must be time limited (no more than 6 months and preferably 8 to 12 weeks) and require at least fifteen (15) but not more than forty (40) hours of work per week. All TJ must pay at least the minimum wage (\$7.25/hour as of the release of this RFP). Partner4Work encourages applicants to develop TJ placements that pay our self-sustaining wage (currently \$14.28/hour); however, wages more than \$10.15/hour will not be reimbursed. Applicants that leverage external funding to offset the wages of participants will be given priority consideration.

The applicant will manage the TJ program and may partner with a host site to provide TJ placements or develop TJ placements in-house. A host site is a for-profit or non-profit organization, government organization, or educational institution that provides a TJ placement. Host sites must provide day-to-day supervision of the TJ participant while on site. The successful applicant must develop an MOU or agreement with each host site clearly laying out rules and responsibilities. While Partner4Work encourages the inclusion of such MOUs with proposals, they are not a required proposal component. Host sites may be developed on an on-going basis.

TJ programs must adhere to the Partner4Work WIOA Transitional Jobs Policy located at <https://www.partner4work.org/uploads/p4w-transitional-jobs-policy.pdf>.

1. Recruit and enroll TJ participants and work/host sites.

The successful applicant will develop a transitional job (TJ) for each program participant. TJ placements must include a position description, and each placement must have a clearly defined supervisor with whom program staff regularly communicate regarding the status of the TJ participant. The successful applicant will serve as the employer of record for the TJ participant and is responsible for ensuring that TJ wages, the employer's share of federal Social Security and Medicare taxes, unemployment, and worker's compensation insurance are paid.

Additionally, the TJ program and host site must ensure that timesheets are filled out appropriately. TJ programs are responsible for training host sites and holding host sites accountable for TJ goals, rules, and policies.

TJ are meant to build a work history and job skills that help individuals secure and maintain unsubsidized employment and prepare for long-term success in the labor market; however, they are not required to lead to unsubsidized employment with the host site. Still, the host may hire the transitional worker at any time during the TJ. The successful applicant must work with the host site to ensure that a TJ participant does not displace any current employees.

Priority will be given to applicants proposing programs that develop occupational skills along an in-demand career pathway and those that build systemic approaches to chronic unemployment.

2. Provide supportive services, career services, and case management to TJ participants.

Career and supportive services must be provided by the TJ provider. Proposals should clearly specify the structure for the provision of career and supportive services in both the program description and budget narrative sections.

Career services include:

- Assessment of skill levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency), aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Job search and placement assistance;
- Career counseling, including the provision of labor market information;
- Referral to partners to meet work readiness and supportive service needs, including child care; and
- Additional services as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) section 134 (c).

Supportive services may include transportation, non-employer paid licensing or testing fees, and/or drug testing and criminal background checks. Partner4Work will consider additional supportive services if justified by the applicant and if related costs are determined allowable and reasonable.

TJ programs are expected to provide case management and complete an employment assessment and individualized employment plan (IEP) for every participant.

3. Match TJ participants with work/host sites and support placement.

After initial assessment and work readiness determination, TJ participants should be matched with an appropriate host site placement. While ideally the TJ placement is in line with the individual's eventual chosen field, TJ need not align with high priority occupations or a specific career path. Priority will be given to proposals that develop occupational skills along an in-demand career pathway and build systemic approaches to chronic unemployment. After the participant has been placed in a TJ, the TJ program must provide regular contact and support to both the placement site and the participant to address concerns and ensure a successful TJ experience.

4. Provide unsubsidized job placement, retention and follow-up services.

TJ programs must work with TJ participants during and after their TJ placement to find and retain unsubsidized employment. Participants must be exited from the program throughout the program year on a rolling basis, according to the TJ provider's assessment of each participant's needs and progress. The TJ provider must provide follow-up services for at least 6 months after participants have exited the TJ program. Follow-up

services must occur, at a minimum, once every quarter. Follow-up services may include but are not limited to: contact to determine work status; counseling regarding the workplace; additional career planning and counseling; job re-placement; and referral to supportive services. Follow-up services must include more than just an attempted contact.

Program Management and Compliance

We count on our providers to deliver quality services, keep good records, and collect data that will help us continue to grow the Transitional Jobs initiative.

- **Online Database:** All TJ providers must use the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) as the information system of record for all client service provision and program activities, including but not limited to eligibility, enrollment, assessment, TJ placement, case notes, career services, supportive services, job placement, program exit and follow up services. If needed, Partner4Work will arrange training for successful applicants on data entry in CWDS and provide ongoing technical support.
- **Reports:** Partner4Work is responsible for all levels of program monitoring, evaluation and reporting on TJ funded activities. TJ providers are required to provide Partner4Work with timely reports and supporting documentation that clearly demonstrate participant enrollment, participation, progress, outputs and outcomes. Partner4Work will work with the TJ provider to understand reporting requirements and program exiting procedures.

Program Cost Reimbursement

Transitional Jobs is a cost reimbursement program. This means your organization must have the financial capacity to pay all program costs up front. We’ll require an invoice, proof of expenses, and required documentation in order to process a reimbursement. Partner4Work will only reimburse providers for actual expenses incurred during the effective dates of the contract. The reimbursement timeline will be finalized during the contract negotiation. Allowable costs will be determined by all applicable federal, state and local regulations, including but not limited to the Uniform Guidance³ and WIOA regulations.

Transitional Jobs Performance Standards

In accordance with WIOA, Partner4Work maintains negotiated performance goals with the State of Pennsylvania that apply to all our WIOA funded programs. The Partner4Work negotiated performance goals can be found in our Local Workforce Development Plan at www.partner4work.org. Those that apply to the TJ program can be found below. Contracts resulting from this RFP must, at a minimum, meet the negotiated performance goals for Adults, as defined in the Partner4Work Local Plan. Contracts resulting from this RFP will be evaluated according to the performance standards below.

Transitional Jobs Required Performance Standards		
Performance Standard	Definition	Goal
Program Enrollment	Number of individuals enrolled in the TJ program.	Proposed by Applicant
Job Placement	Number of participants who obtain unsubsidized employment.	Proposed by Applicant
2nd Quarter Employment Rate*	Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exiting the program.	Minimum goal of 65%

³ See the Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR 200.

2nd Quarter Median Income*	Median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exiting the program.	Minimum goal of \$5,000
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Transitional Jobs Optional Performance Standards		
Performance Standard	Definition	Target
Credential Attainment*	Percentage of participants who attained a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation or within 1 year of exiting the program.	Proposed by Applicant
Measurable Skill Gains*	Percentage of participants who attained measurable skill gains defined as academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress toward a credential or employment.	Proposed by Applicant

*WIOA primary indicators of performance. See further information at <https://www.doleta.gov/performance/>. See Guidance for Planning Performance, Primary Indicators of Performance.

How to Apply

Submit your proposal by Friday, May 4, 2018 at 5:00 pm to info@partner4work.org. Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. Emails should have the subject line “[Organization name] Transitional Jobs Provider Proposal.” Proposals are limited to ten (10) pages, excluding the cover sheet and any letters of support or MOUs. Your proposal must contain all of the following content:

1. **Cover Sheet** – Use form provided; see Attachment 1
2. **Organization Description**

Describe each of the following for your organization:

- a. Basic organizational description, including mission, principal programs and services, annual budget and number of full-time staff.
- b. Past experience in managing quality workforce development programs, especially those similar to the transitional jobs program, and effectively serving individuals with barriers to employment, including related performance outcomes.
- c. Administrative capacity, including but not limited to your organization’s ability to produce timely and accurate program reports, utilize client management systems (see Program Management and Compliance section), and provide fiscal support and oversight.

3. **Program Description**

Describe each of the following for your proposed TJ program:

- a. Proposed program model, including the population(s) you plan to serve and how you will meet the program requirements described in this RFP. Priority will be given to proposals that develop occupational skills along an in-demand career pathway and build systemic approaches to chronic unemployment. Be sure to address how you will:
 - i. Recruit, enroll and assess TJ participants.
 - ii. Address barriers to employment for TJ participants.
 - iii. Develop TJ host sites and placements. Describe the placements to be developed as well as the role of employers and/or partners in your proposed program model, if applicable, including any current relationships with host sites, if applicable.
 - iv. Match TJ participants with work/host sites and support placement of TJ participants.
 - v. Provide supportive services, career services, and case management to TJ participants.

- vi. Provide unsubsidized job placement, retention and follow-up services.
- b. Performance goals, including numerical targets for each of the required performance standards, and optional performance standards, if applicable.⁴ Proposed goals may not be less than Partner4Work negotiated WIOA performance goals. Organizations are encouraged to submit proposals with goals that exceed the negotiated levels. Program enrollment goals must clearly indicate the number of participants from each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) - Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh.⁵ If you are a provider who has not met performance goals of any prior Partner4Work contracts, address how you will ensure goals are met for your proposed TJ program. Also, be sure to describe how you will collect and track data related to these performance goals.
- c. Timeline illustrating the major activities and services of the proposed program. All TJ participants must be exited from the program by June 30, 2019. As such, provide a deadline for enrollment in the timeline that allows for positive program exits for all individuals enrolled.
- d. Staffing plan for both program-related and administrative positions, including basic roles, responsibilities, and level of effort.
- e. Any other services, programs, or resources you will offer TJ participants, if applicable, and any funds you plan to leverage in support of your proposed program, if applicable.⁶

4. Budget

Provide each of the following for your proposed TJ program:

- a. Budget for all program-related and administrative costs. Use form provided; see Attachment 2. All costs must be allowable according to applicable federal, state and local regulations, including but not limited to the Uniform Guidance and WIOA regulations. The total program cost per participant should align with comparable industry standards.
- b. Narrative that justifies the budget and describes the purpose and calculation of each line item.

5. Attachments

- a. Letters from community agencies, businesses or other institutions demonstrating support or commitment for the proposed TJ program.
- b. Memorandums of understanding with businesses or other employers acting as host sites for TJ participants.⁶

Review and Selection Process

Partner4Work will review proposals according to the required content described in the How to Apply section above with attention to completeness and quality. High scoring proposals will clearly demonstrate an ability and likelihood to meet the standards and intended outcomes of the TJ program. Scoring for the required sections of the proposal will be assigned as follows:

Proposal Review Scoring Rubric	
Cover Sheet	5 points available

⁴ Partner4Work will consider TJ proposals that do not include goals for credential attainment or measurable skill gains, but such proposals should explain why these measures are omitted.

⁵ In Allegheny County, WIOA funding is designated for two distinct workforce areas – City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. For purposes of this RFP and any resulting contracts, City of Pittsburgh residents are not considered Allegheny County residents.

⁶ Not required components of a complete proposal; however, submitting these components, if applicable, may strengthen the quality of the proposal.

Organization Description a) Basic description b) Past experience c) Administrative capacity	20 points available, as follows: a) 5 b) 10 c) 5
Program Description a) Program model b) Performance goals c) Timeline d) Staffing plan	55 points available, as follows: a) 20 b) 15 c) 10 d) 10
Budget a) Program budget b) Budget narrative	15 points available, as follows: a) 10 b) 5
Attachments a) Letters of support or commitment	5 points available, as follows: a) 5
Total points available	100 points

The number of proposals selected will depend on the availability of funding and the quality of proposals. Successful applicants will be invited to negotiate a contract for services based on the project described in the proposal and stipulations of the funding source.

Review Timeline (all dates are subject to change):

Release of RFP:	April 2, 2018
Proposal due date:	May 4, 2018 by 5:00 PM
Questions regarding this RFP due:	April 20, 2018
Selection of providers:	early June 2018

Questions or Requests

All questions or requests for additional information must be made in writing to info@partner4work.org by April 20, 2018 at 5:00 PM. Answers will be posted publicly at www.partner4work.org. Interested parties are encouraged to check the website frequently for updates. Questions received after April 20, 2018 at 5:00 PM will not be answered.

Disclaimers

- This Request for Proposals (RFP) 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.
- 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 RFP are not in excess of those that would be charged 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 RFPs 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 RFPs.
- 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 RFP.