



Request for Proposals Q&A

Updated March 17, 2021

**Allegheny County EARN and Work Ready Programs
Workforce Development Services**

Similar questions may be grouped together with one answer provided for the group.

Q. Is profit allowable? How can we incorporate profit and management fees into the proposed budget?

A. While profit is allowed for for-profit entities, the extent to which an applicant can meet performance objectives while minimizing indirect and profit costs will be a factor in the evaluation process. Profit can be included in the Other section of the budget template and disclosed in the budget narrative.

Q. Can EARN be provided out of the CareerLink? If so, what would the cost of rent be per person/cube in the CareerLink?

A. Current locations of PA CareerLink® centers in Allegheny County are listed below, which are subject to change. Leases for both centers are nearing expiration and PA CareerLink® is evaluating space options. Further space evaluation would be needed to determine whether either PA CareerLink® center could accommodate a full or partial EARN and Work Ready program; however, P4W is open to proposals and discussions regarding some level of program co-location or representation in PA CareerLink® centers. Should applicants choose to include program representation in either of the PA CareerLink® centers in Allegheny County, a contribution to the Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) should be included in the proposed budget. The approximate cost for an FTE in either center is currently between \$15,000-\$20,000 annually and is renegotiated each year. By contributing to the RSA, staff are provided with basic office furnishings and access to equipment, which includes standard furniture, such as a cubicle or office room, desk, chair, and file storage; telephone service and related equipment (e.g., desk phone); internet service, including Wi-Fi; and access to multifunction printer/copier/scanners. The RSA contribution also covers costs related to information technology, equipment, supplies and furniture shared by PA CareerLink® partners (e.g., conference rooms, signage, brochures) or made available to the public (e.g., Career Resource Center, classrooms).

PA CareerLink® Downtown Pittsburgh
304 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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PA CareerLink® Allegheny East
2040 Ardmore Blvd
Pittsburgh, PA 15221

Q. What is the current cost per participant in the EARN program?

A. All funds for any agreement resulting from this RFP will be made available on a cost reimbursement basis. There will be no fixed cost per participant defined by the contracts resulting from this RFP.

The historical cost per participant of the EARN and Work Ready programs is discussed below, provided for informational purposes only. Applicants should consider a number of factors in developing a proposal, including but not limited to the average number of enrollments in a usual program year, the work requirements described in this RFP, the amount of funds available through this RFP, the current structure of EARN and Work Ready, and applicant-specific knowledge and experience. Effective budgets will enable the proposed program to meet the intent and requirements of the contract, while being realistic, reasonable and prudent, avoiding unnecessary or unusual expenditures.

The historical cost per participant of the EARN and Work Ready programs, defined as the total cost of all provider contracts divided by the total number of program enrollments in a given program year (PY), fluctuates annually along with the volume of referrals and enrollments. In PY18, the average cost per participant of the EARN and Work Ready programs was \$2,655. In PY19, the COVID-19 Pandemic inflated the cost per participant, especially during the 4th quarter of PY19, due to a significant decrease in referrals and the costs of handling program-related effects of the Pandemic. In PY20 (current year), the inflated cost per participant has continued to grow, along with the Pandemic and the re-designed EARN and Work Ready programs introduced by PADHS. These complicating factors, and the unknown result of this RFP, make it highly difficult to estimate the cost per participant in PY21.

Q. Annually how many EARN participants are serviced in each of the 3 areas?

A. In Program Year (PY) 2018, the Allegheny County EARN and Work Ready programs enrolled a total of 1,135 cases, which is reflective of a typical year of programming. Due to the emergence of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the total number of enrolled cases dropped to 704 in PY19. Although the EARN and Work Ready programs are still currently serving a lower than average number of participants, Partner4Work expects the volume of participants to return to pre-pandemic levels as conditions improve. In a normal program year, approximately 45% of participants are served by the downtown center and 55% are served evenly between the McKeesport and Wilkinsburg centers.

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Q. Is this RFP release on schedule or early-release? If early-release, what is the reasoning?

A. Partner4Work has issued this RFP in response to several recent developments, including but not limited to the EARN and Work Ready re-design introduced by PA Department of Human Services, and to ensure compliance with procurement regulations. As always, Partner4Work reserves the right to procure for services as often as is necessary to meet market needs and organizational requirements.

Q. In developing the EARN program budget, how should applicants plan for SNAP? Which costs are allowable for SNAP participants and which aren't?

A. All applicants must provide two separate budgets, one for EARN and one for Work Ready. The proposed EARN budget should not be divided into TANF and SNAP-related costs. Selected applicants will be invited to negotiate a contract for services, at which point the division of TANF and SNAP-related costs for EARN will be established. Applicants should refer to the described composition and average volume of EARN and Work Ready in the RFP as points of reference in developing program budgets.

All costs must be allowable according to applicable federal, state and local regulations, including but not limited to the Uniform Guidance and regulations of the funding source (e.g., TANF and SNAP), and allocable to the proposed program.

Q. If an applicant is proposing to provide services at more than one location, is a separate proposal required for each location, or can more than one location be included in one proposal? Should separate budgets be submitted for each location, or is one budget for all locations combined sufficient?

A. Applicants must submit one proposal to include both the EARN and Work Ready programs, whether proposing to deliver services in one or multiple locations. Applicants must submit two separate budgets, one for EARN and one for Work Ready. If you are proposing to deliver EARN and Work Ready services in multiple locations, do not break down your proposed budgets by location; instead, provide total budget amounts that include costs for all locations proposed. Instead, use the budget narrative to clearly allocate all costs of your proposal to each location.

Q. What documentation is required if proposing a new program location?

A. All proposals must clearly describe the exact location(s) proposed for EARN and Work Ready centers, including description of the physical space, and meet all site standards described in the RFP. Through this RFP, Partner4Work intends to procure service provision for the EARN and Work Ready programs in geographic locations similar to those currently existing; however,

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applicants are welcome to propose different geographic locations. Proposals with different geographic locations must provide justification based on clear rationale and well-established data, including but not limited to ease of access, proximity to prospective EARN and Work Ready clients, added value of additional services or resources, and any other factor supporting the proposed location. Qualified applicants may submit proposals to deliver EARN and Work Ready services in one or more locations.

Partner4Work does not require specific documentation to consider a proposal presenting a potentially new program location. However, proposals should clearly demonstrate the feasibility of utilizing the new location and the applicant's preparedness to utilize the new location. The proposed location must meet all other space-related requirements described in the RFP.

P4W does not maintain site control or ownership of any of the EARN centers; rather, each center is selected and directly managed by the contracted agency providing EARN services, although all arrangements are subject to approval by P4W. The location, space arrangements, supplies, equipment and materials necessary to operate the EARN center are the responsibility of the contracted agency. Selected applicants will be responsible for site administration, operations and service delivery within the EARN center.

Applicants should include in proposed budgets all necessary supply, equipment and materials costs for conducting the proposed EARN program.

Q. New bidders likely will incur startup costs for facilities and equipment that may not be incurred for incumbent vendors. Will P4W pay startup and/or transition costs? Should new bidders include startup costs in their proposal?

A. If you are not currently providing contracted services for the Allegheny County EARN and Work Ready Program, please read the RFP carefully to understand requirements related to potential transition and ensure your proposal addresses all factors described in the RFP.

All proposal budgets should include the necessary space, materials, equipment, supply and related costs associated with the ongoing operation of the proposed EARN and Work Ready center(s). However, non-incumbent bidders should not include temporary startup costs in their proposed budgets that would be incurred in the event that this RFP leads to a change of contracted agencies currently providing services for the EARN and Work Ready programs. Partner4Work reserves the right to negotiate a transition period during which incoming and outgoing EARN and Work Ready providers work concurrently to ensure a smooth transition and minimize disruptions to clients and employers. If a non-incumbent bidder is selected for an award, they will be invited to negotiate a contract for services, including potential discussions regarding the costs and contractual arrangements associated with transition.

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Q. On page 10, the RFP requires the proposal to be written in Calibri, 11 point, double-spaced. May tables and charts be single-spaced and in a smaller font as long as legible?

A. Tables and charts may be single-spaced and in a smaller font, if they are legible. However, please keep in mind that tables, charts, graphs and other illustrations included in sections of your proposal where length limitations apply will be counted toward such limitations.

Q. On page 10, the RFP requires proposals to be double spaced. Please confirm this is only applicable to the executive summary and program narrative.

A. The narrative, page-limited sections of your proposal must be submitted in 11-point, Calibri font, double-spaced with 1-inch page margins, including the Executive Summary, Organization Overview, Program Narrative, and Budget Narrative. These size and space limitations do not apply to the Cover Sheet or the optional and required attachments.

Q. Are attachments, in addition to those requested in the RFP, allowed in the proposal? If yes, will the contents be viewed as part of the evaluation?

A. Additional attachments not specifically described in the RFP are not allowed and will not be considered.

Q. To best ensure compliance with the identified page limits, please confirm questions/prompts are not subject to the formatting requirements. To best ensure compliance with the identified page limits, please confirm question prompts may be truncated or removed.

A. The required questions or headers of the How to Apply section of the RFP do not have to be included in proposals. If they are included, they may be truncated. In any case, effective proposals will contain all required proposal content and follow the same general order illustrated in the How to Apply section of the RFP.

Q. To assure receipt of email, please confirm any file size limitations. If file size limitations exist, please confirm respondents may submit multiple emails with the required components. (e.g. 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3)

A. There is a file size limitation on emails coming into RFP@partner4work.org. The total size of attachments to a single email cannot exceed 25MB. Should the size of your proposal exceed this limitation, you may submit multiple emails. In all cases, in order to be considered, your proposal must be received by Partner4Work no later than the date and time specified in the RFP. Partner4Work is not responsible for any technological failures that may prevent your proposal from being received on time.