

# Request for Proposals - Questions and Answers Document

## Occupational Training Services

### Industry-Recognized Training Pipeline

Updated 2/23/24

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

- **Can Partner4Work elaborate on what potential bidders can expect from Partner4Work in terms of facilitating employer relationships? We would ideally like P4W to facilitate introductions to member employers in order to place participants. Is that a service that P4W expects to provide?**

The RFP states, “successful applicants will propose quality training programs with proven connections to committed employers willing to provide opportunities for full time employment to participants who complete training.” Other sections of the RFP also underscore the importance of employment opportunities connected to proposed programs. Partner4Work may request collaboration with selected programs related to employer engagement and job placement for program participants; however, job placement for program participants will primarily be the responsibility of the selected programs.

- **What would you like to see for evidence of employer commitment to hire individuals and letters of support in absence of long-standing MOU's?**

The proposal states, “preference will be given to applicants who can demonstrate employer commitments through established MOUs, although letters of support from employers will also be considered.” The RFP does not prescribe the form and content of letters of support from employers. In general, letters from employers should provide evidence of employer buy-in to the proposed program (e.g., quality job opportunities available to program participants), positive past experiences, and other forms of favorable feedback specific to the proposed program. The intent of employer MOUs or letters of support is to demonstrate that the proposed program has “proven connections to committed employers willing to provide opportunities for full time employment to participants who complete training.”

- **What is the expected turnaround time for reimbursement from Partner4Work?**
- **Is required supporting documentation for invoicing listed in the RFP?**

Partner4Work expects to make payment on complete invoices within 45 days of receipt. Additionally, applicable supporting documentation is required with each invoice submission. Please reference the Payments Section of the RFP to understand the basic terms and basis for payments, including what will constitute a complete invoice. Selected applicants must also be up-to-date with all PA CareerLink® reporting and documentation requirements in order to receive payment.

- **How does this RFP combine with other funding streams to cover the cost of the programs?**

Partner4Work intends to use various funding sources, at its discretion, to support agreements resulting from the RFP. Anticipated funding sources are listed in the Anticipated Award section of

the RFP. Which funding sources are used will depend on various factors, including but not limited to participant eligibility, funding availability, and allowability. Partner4Work and PA CareerLink® will work closely with selected applicants to understand funding sources and related requirements.

- **Is the maximum budget request \$300,000?**

The range of anticipated award values defined in the RFP is provided for informational purposes only. It does not restrict Partner4Work from awarding contracts of value outside that range. Please note, however, that program cost will be considered as an important factor in the proposal evaluation process. Please also note that Partner4Work expects to award multiple contracts, not to exceed the total identified in the RFP, to ensure that the portfolio of IRTF programs can span a broad range of participants, occupations, and industries.

- **Are indirect costs allowed? If so, are they part of the total maximum request? Are funds for salaries (including fringe benefits) permitted in the budget?**

The RFP states, “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, and allocable to the proposed program.” As such, indirect costs and salary costs would be permitted, as long as they are allowable, allocable, and properly accounted for. However, please carefully review the Payments Section of the RFP to better understand the cost structure of any contracts resulting from the RFP.

- **Would it be preferred to outline a total cost per-participant cost and request a percentage of funds across all participants, or request total funding of a percentage of participants out of the full cohort?**

The RFP requires applicants to propose a fixed cost per participant for the program, with payments made to selected applicants according to the terms described in the Payments Section of the RFP. The fixed cost per participant contained in a proposal does not have to cover all costs associated with the proposed program; i.e., applicants may decide to propose a per participant cost that covers all or part of the total program cost.

- **Can bidders work with other sub-contractors to recruit and enroll participants? Are we allowed to provide part of the training through consultants?**

Applicants may propose use of subcontractors; however, the lead applicant/fiscal agent and specific subcontractors must be clearly identified. Please note, in this scenario, Partner4Work would contract with one lead organization. All entities whether directly contracted or subcontracted via the lead applicant/fiscal agent will be held to the requirements of federal, state, and local policies. Please be aware that additional monitoring, compliance, and assessment requirements will become the responsibility of the lead applicant/fiscal agent.

- **Do you have a list or examples of what you qualify as industry-recognized credentials or an industry-recognized training pipeline?**

See the RFP section called Purpose of this RFP for a list of industry sectors prioritized by the RFP, including occupations on Pennsylvania's High Priority Occupations (HPOs) List - <https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/HPOs/Pages/default.aspx>.

The RFP will prioritize training programs with proven connections to quality employment in high-demand occupations for participants who complete training. Please reference the How to Apply section of the RFP for more information on demonstrating employer commitment, job alignment, and occupational outlook.

- **For the SAM registration – do you need a copy of an actual registration, or is the status, expiration date and UEI sufficient?**

A UEI should be enough to determine active registration and good standing. Partner4Work may contact you should additional information be required.

- **Must participants both reside and work in Allegheny county to be eligible for invoicing by the applicant?**

A primary goal of the IRTP program is to create quality career opportunities and pathways for residents of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. As such, interested applicants should focus their proposed program on the communities, residents, and employers of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Some funding sources and related requirements applicable to contracts resulting from the RFP may restrict residency of participants to only Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. However, in most cases, residents from other counties may be included as participants incidentally.

- **Our own organization provides additional funding for our proposed program. We also intend to hire participants of the proposed program. Can we use our own organization as a funding contact, or letter of support?**

The RFP requires bidders to “provide contact information for at least two past or current funders (other than Partner4Work) who can directly attest to the work you describe and verify your ability to serve customers, achieve deliverables and meet performance goals similar to those required by this RFP.” The RFP also states, “Proposals must include evidence of employer commitment to hire individuals who complete the program. Preference will be given to applicants who can demonstrate employer commitments through established MOUs, although letters of support from employers will also be considered.”

Funder references should come from entities who can objectively “attest to the work you describe and verify your ability to serve customers, achieve deliverables and meet performance goals similar to those required by this RFP.” References from within a bidder’s own organization are not preferred, but may be considered if objectivity and direct, relevant experience with the proposed program are established. Partner4Work reserves the right to determine if objectivity and relevant experience exist, which could affect the score of a given proposal.

The purpose of requiring “evidence of employer commitment to hire individuals who complete the program” is to ensure that quality career opportunities will be available to participants of the program. If job opportunities are available through the same organization delivering the proposed program, and the proposal clearly establishes that program participants will have access to those opportunities, Partner4Work may consider such an arrangement as “evidence of employer commitment to hire individuals.” In any case, proposals will be evaluated based on the strength of connections to quality employment opportunities, as well as related factors described in the RFP.

- **Would it be preferable to choose an upcoming funder as a reference, or one who has a history with our wider organization? Does it matter if the reference is not necessarily specific to the program seeking IRTP funding?**

Bidders should select references based on their ability to “directly attest to the work you describe and verify your ability to serve customers, achieve deliverables and meet performance goals similar to those required by this RFP.” References who do not directly relate to the proposed program, but who can attest to similar work, including the criteria described in the statement above, may be considered.

- **Industry recognized credentialing will occur after the program ends. A participant may complete the training program, and even obtain employment prior to obtaining the credential. Will these participants be considered complete and eligible for the invoicing of the remaining 50% of per participant cost when completing the program?**

The RFP states, “at the start of the training program, applicants may invoice Partner4Work for 50% of the per participant cost, as defined in agreements resulting from this RFP, for each enrolled participant who begins the training program. Applicants will be eligible for the remaining 50% of the per participant cost upon each participant’s completion of the training program or obtainment of an industry recognized credential, depending on the program. Applicants will not receive the second payment, in full or in part, for participants who do not finish the training program or obtain an industry recognized credential.”

Partner4Work will work with selected applicants to determine the appropriate condition for the second payment; i.e., whether the second payment should be tied to completion of the training program or obtainment of an industry recognized credential. Without knowing the details of the program, Partner4Work cannot make such a determination. However, Partner4Work will work with all selected applicants to ensure that criteria for the second payment are clearly defined.

- **What level of detail is needed for the staffing plan? Are position descriptions required?**

The RFP requires that proposals include a “staffing plan for key positions supporting the proposed program, including titles, basic roles, responsibilities, and level of effort.” Strong proposals will clearly describe how the applicant will employ professional staff with the knowledge and expertise in the Statement of Work; ensure a high level of staff performance, competency and quality customer service. Actual position descriptions or resumes are not required components of a complete proposal.

- **What kind of documentation will be required of individuals and students who take part in a funded program? Will students and trainees be required to provide identification, social security cards, etc.?**

The Statement of Work in the RFP states, “final eligibility and suitability determinations for all participants of PROGRAM covered through this Agreement will be made by staff members of PA CareerLink®, or other entities designated by PARTNER4WORK. CONTRACTOR will work with PA CareerLink® to facilitate the eligibility and enrollment process for all potential participants, which includes verifying eligibility for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, or other programs included in this Agreement, and establishing participants’ suitability to engage in occupational training.”

Although Partner4Work may use various funding sources to support agreements resulting from this RFP, which may have varying participant eligibility criteria, requirements of the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs will serve as the core criteria for most participants covered by resulting agreements. Interested bidders can find related criteria in Partner4Work’s WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Policy Guide (linked below) and directly in WIOA guidance and regulations.

<https://www.partner4work.org/document/wioa-adult/dislocated-worker-policy-guide-2023/>