

Section 3.6 Community and Youth Projects

Introduction

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is committed to a future in which individuals have the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes to work and earn incomes that make them self-sufficient. The Board works to ensure a single, integrated workforce system in the 13-county Gulf Coast region so that:

- individuals can learn and work in their homes, in schools, and on the job to realize their greatest potential.
- people throughout the region know about the system and can access the same high-quality information and labor market services regardless of where they live or how they encounter the system.
- strong commitments to innovation, productivity, accountability, and results keep the system flexible and responsive to employers' and peoples' ever-changing workforce needs.
- Life-long learning and skills development are integral parts of the regional workforce system.

The Board intends that its system will support the needs of young people in the region to

- Complete high school or obtain a high-school equivalency with good information about careers and good jobs of the future in the region;
- Enter post-secondary training or education – including work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeships and on-the-job training – to enter employment; and
- Access lifelong learning opportunities to advance in careers and earnings over time.

Community and Youth Projects

The Board's community and youth projects are directed specifically to young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are out of school (not attending any school, including post-secondary) and who face challenges in obtaining the education, skills or experience they need to get good jobs. The Board seeks to set the standard for helping these young people – often referred to as opportunity youth – get a job, keep a job, or get a better job.

The purpose of this solicitation is to provide direct service for these opportunity youth and young adults through a mix of Workforce Solutions funding and strategic partnerships with other youth-serving organizations.

We seek to:

- Align youth-serving institutions to ease access, reduce duplication, close service gaps and promote collaboration
- Reduce the number of young persons who are not engaged with the labor market, entry into career pathways, increased education and/or paid work experience; and
- Improve outcomes for youth and young adults through rapid job placement or accelerated credential attainment and increased literacy and numeracy levels

Current Operations

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board has three contractors that currently provide services for eligible young people, who are ages 16-24, out-of-school, and have multiple challenges that prevent them from finding or maintaining employment. Our contractors:

- Provide case management, career and personal counseling, mentoring, help in completing their education, and financial aid assistance for scholarships, child care, and work support;
- Prepare employment plans and support customers through their course of services;
- Help customers enroll in education and training programs or provide such education credentials and training for customers;
- Recommend and arrange for work-based learning activities including internships, and summer jobs to help youth into full-time jobs; and
- Work with Workforce Solutions career offices to recruit and cross-refer youth and young adult customers wanting and needing services.

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The following agencies and organizations are encouraged to respond:

- Public and private nonprofit entities that can demonstrate a history of working with youth and young adults;
- Public and private nonprofit entities that can demonstrate fiscal independence (have multiple revenue sources and are not solely dependent upon Workforce Solutions' funds.);
- Agencies or organizations that can demonstrate a willingness to collaborate with other community youth service providers; and
- Nonprofit institutions not described above that have the capacity and experience to provide comprehensive services to youth and young adults.

Focus Areas

We are particularly interested in soliciting projects that work with opportunity youth in the following geographic locations:

- Houston – near north side and 5th Ward
- Houston – Acres Home
- Houston – East End/2nd Ward
- Houston – 3rd Ward
- Houston – Gulfton area
- Aldine
- Humble/East Montgomery County (Porter-New Caney-Splendora)
- Baytown
- Northshore-Channelview
- Angleton-Brazosport
- Texas City-La Marque-Dickinson
- Missouri City-Fresno-Hiram Clarke-Windsor Village (Almeda/South Post Oak)
- Alief
- Hempstead area
- Liberty County

Essential Elements

Proposals must demonstrate ability to ensure all essential elements are available (either directly or in partnership) to customers:

- **Work-based Learning:**
 - Paid and unpaid work experiences that include academic and occupational education (i.e. summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, and on-the-job training opportunities)
- **Career Pathways:**
 - Integrated Education and Training
 - Occupational skill training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or targeted occupations
 - Multiple entry and exit points that provide adequate wrap-around support to meet the wide range of challenges faced by various youth populations
 - Entrepreneurial Skills Training
- **Credential Attainment:**
 - Tutoring, study skills training, instruction
 - Alternative secondary school services and evidence-based dropout prevention and credit recovery strategies
 - High School Equivalency Preparation

- **Career Academies:**
 - Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service, parenting and work behavior training, and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors
 - Financial Coaching
 - Career counseling and exploration services that help youth and young adults prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training
- **Mentoring and Support:**
 - Links to community resources
 - Assistance with transportation, childcare, housing, and other service which enable an individual to participate in work or training
 - Long-term follow-up (a minimum of one year) upon completion to ensure continued support and success in post-secondary education, training, or employment
 - 24/7 guidance and counseling, which may include mental health and drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate

How It Works

Community and youth projects should launch young adults on a meaningful career pathway towards good jobs in our region. We blend an array of service – from Workforce Solutions and partner agencies – to help young people develop essential workplace skills, improve their education and occupational skills and find a job, keep a job and get a better job.

We expect contractors to:

- Conduct creative “grass-roots” outreach and recruitment activities to identify customers for Workforce Solutions assistance within the local community
- Complete thorough intake interviews and collect eligibility documentation for financial aid. The Financial Aid Support Office determines eligibility.
- Maintain counseling records in The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST), job applications in WorkInTexas.com and financial aid commitments in Workforce Solutions’ Financial Aid Management System (FAMS.)
- Conduct individual assessments that are comprehensive in nature, and can accurately identify a plan to provide services that are necessary and appropriate for eligible youth to be successful in attaining higher skills, educational credentials and jobs
- Work closely with Adult Education and Training Consortium providers to refer customers for academic skills remediation, high school equivalency preparation, English literacy instruction.
- Develop effective community partnerships that will support the service delivery needs of youth as identified in the comprehensive assessment
- Conduct career exploration activities with structured opportunities to explore a range of career options in an industry. This includes labor market information sessions on career

clusters and occupations, college fairs and campus visits, job site visits, and industry and community guest speaking events

- Connect customers to skill development opportunities
- Help customers enroll in education and training programs or provide such education and training for customers. This includes providing financial aid for school through Workforce Solutions' Financial Aid Payment Office as well as other scholarships and financial aid available through alternative private and public funds.
- Work closely with **Employer Service*** to provide employer leads, share employer feedback, develop and structure work-based learning opportunities that match the skills and interests of customers and address the needs of the employer.
- Engage a significant number of young people in meaningful work-based learning activities to develop workplace skills.
- Provide supportive services as appropriate
- Maintain contact and active engagement with employers and customers regarding work performance, training progress, and retention
- Work with Workforce Solutions career offices, Regional Facilitation Team, Adult Education and Literacy Consortium, and Financial Aid Payment Office on special initiatives to ensure the highest level of service for customers.

***Employer Service** is primarily responsible for developing relationships with employers for year-round work-based learning experience activities including internships, registered apprenticeships, paid work experience, enhanced summer jobs, and on-the-job training.

Successful Bidders

We invest in service that employs best practices for youth development -- service that meets the psychological/social/emotional needs of young people, provides education and training assistance, and offers wrap-around supports focusing on employment outcomes.

We expect successful bidders to set real time outcome goals on the following:

- Opportunity youth enrollments
- GED/High School Diplomas earned
- Credentials and Certificates earned
- Young people participating in work based learning
- Placements into unsubsidized employment
- Placements into employment related training
- Placements into post-secondary education
- Placements into advanced training

Successful bidders will also offer projects that:

- Incorporate intensive case management, career exploration and readiness, and career pathways (academic and occupational)

- Use life and socio-emotional learning skills to better equip young people with non-cognitive abilities needed for successful employment
- Ensure access to all the Essential Elements (identified above) while demonstrating an understanding of how appropriate services impact the employability of in-school and out-of-school youth and young adults
- Demonstrate success and/or an actionable plan for serving the counties outside of Harris County and the metropolitan area.
- Work successfully with young people who are court-involved, in foster care or aging out of foster care, homeless, truant, transient, disabled, and military service veterans.

How to Submit a Proposal

Submit your proposal in the following order:

- 1.0 Proposal Cover Sheet
- 2.0 Information about your organization
- 3.0 Information about your bid
- 4.0 Budget and staffing summary
- 5.0 All Certifications
- 6.0 Copy of organization's most recent audit and audited financial statements

Information about Your Organization

Tell us about the lead organization of the project.

- 1) Describe your organizational structure and why it is structured that way. Is the organization for-profit or non-profit? (no more than 1 page)
- 2) Provide an organization chart that shows graphically how your organization operates. (no more than 1 page)
- 3) Describe any governing boards such as a board of directors or advisory board. Provide the names and terms of the Board members. Include information about affiliated organizations such as subsidiaries or parent companies, and specifically describe relations. (no more than 1 page)
- 4) Provide a list of key staff for the organization. At a minimum, all staff working with the youth as case managers, teachers, job coaches (etc.) must have at least an associate degree in social work, psychology, business, education, or a related field or it must be noted how an individual is working toward the qualification. Include job descriptions for all positions in the organization affiliated with youth services. Additionally, resumes are required for all organization personnel affiliated with the delivery of youth services.
- 5) Provide a description of your financial stability and any comments you wish to make about your credit rating, your payment policies, and any recognition you may have

received from accrediting or other bodies for organization or financial excellence. Has your organization experienced any financial difficulty in the past five years? (no more than 1 page)

- 6) Include references from at least three organizations that have contracted with your organization to provide services similar to those proposed. Include the name of the organization, a contact person, telephone number, email address of the contact person, the amount and term of the contract(s), the service your organization provided through the contract(s), and the outcome(s) of the contract(s).

Information about Your Proposal

Tell us about your project. (no more than 20 pages)

- Describe your organization's experience in helping youth and young adults become career ready. Describe the challenges related to this population. How would this service look different when serving in-school youth versus out-of-school youth and young adults?
- Provide a detailed description of your project and the activities in which a customer would participate including all services received. Discuss how you will incorporate work-based learning activities, paid or unpaid, in your project. Fully describe how each activity will support project goals for education/skill certification and full-time employment in good jobs.
- Describe in detail your strategies for targeted outreach, recruitment, enrolling and orienting youth. Please identify any unique recruiting timelines and/or include strategies for maintaining an active caseload through the year.
- Describe how youth will be assessed upon enrollment. Include a description of any tools or methods used to determine the following: levels of basic skills, work readiness skills, interests and aptitudes, occupational skills and supportive service needs. Explain how these assessments inform the service strategy for youth.
- Describe your experience in tracking/reporting outcomes, including any experience using The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) and WorkInTexas.com.
- Describe the geographic area in which you will work. Detail how and where services will be provided.
- If your proposal includes a consortium, tell us who the members are, what role each will play, and what services each partner will provide. If consortium partners will provide matching funds or in-kind contributions, describe, in detail, what each will provide and how it supports the proposed project.

- Select one of the scenarios listed below and develop an Employment Plan for the customer. Describe, in detail, the service that you would provide or facilitate to help the customer achieve the stated goals or to overcome any identified barriers. Be specific.
 - Lisa is a 19-year old female who lives in public housing. She is receiving TANF, has a one-year old daughter and does not own a car. She has completed 11th grade and tested at a 7th grade reading level and 8th grade math. She previously worked in fast food restaurants but quit because she does not trust anyone other than her father to care for her daughter. Lisa would like to become a nurse in the future.
 - Damian is a 22-year old male who completed a couple of classes in college before dropping out. He owns a car but does not have a valid driver's license. He has an 8th grade reading and 8th grade math level. He has some previous work history in shipping and receiving and wants to get a job. He is interested in manufacturing.
 - Antoine is a 19-year old male, high school graduate. He lives with his grandparents at home. He has no work history and is involved with the court system. He has a 10th grade reading level and 12th grade math. He did not take the ACT or SAT. He would like to pursue college or advanced training.
- Describe your strategies for incorporating a career pathway approach into your service delivery system. Identify strategies that move youth along a continuum to increased employability.
- Describe what you consider to be current or past successful collaborations? What made them a success?
- Describe in detail how your organization incorporates work-based learning activities to provide opportunities for youth and young adults to gain work experience. Describe the balance between classroom-based activities and work-based learning opportunities.
- Describe your process for following up with youth. Identify strategies used to ensure participants retain employment and/or persist in college. How will you maintain contact with youth and assist them during the follow up period?
- Describe the physical facilities to be used to house the program. Identify address, total square footage of the site, accessibility to persons with disabilities and all equipment or resources available to youth.
- What steps will you take to ensure that any facilities where customers are served, provide physical accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Texas Accessibility Survey (TAS) guidelines?
- How will you ensure that your services are delivered in a way that makes them equally accessible to individuals with all types of disabilities?

Budget and Staffing

Use the Proposal Budget and Personnel forms provided for in the Resources section of this request and provide a narrative back-up which describes in detail your budget line items. Read the General Budget Instructions page in the Resources section before preparing a budget.

Assurances and Certifications

Use the forms provided in this request. Be sure to include all required forms (certifications for debarment, lobbying, and drug-free workplace; Texas franchise tax; Texas state assessments; the general assurances and certifications; and the conflict of interest questionnaire), and be sure that all are properly signed by an authorized representative of your organization.

Audit and Financial Statements

Attach a copy of your organization's most recent audit as well as audited financial statements.