

Section 4 Adult Education and Literacy

Introduction

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is the recipient of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II funds for Houston-Galveston region. Led by the Workforce Board, the Gulf Coast Adult Education & Literacy Consortium (the “Consortium”) includes Workforce Solutions and eight regional organizations working together to meet the needs of the regional workforce.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is committed to helping adults attain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in local, high-demand jobs. To that end, the Board is soliciting proposals from qualified organizations to provide adult education and literacy services and occupational skills training within the 13-county Gulf Coast region.

Services will provide adults with sufficient basic education that enables them to effectively:

- Achieve self-sufficiency and function in the local economy with ease;
- Participate in job training and retraining programs;
- Obtain and retain employment in a high-demand field;
- Attain a high school equivalent credential; and
- Prepare for postsecondary education and/or training.

Current Operations

Adult education and literacy services and training are currently offered through the Consortium which is comprised of 7 adult education providers and 1 administrative lead agency:

- Brazosport College
- College of the Mainland
- Harris County Department of Education
- Houston Community College
- Lone Star College
- San Jacinto College
- Wharton County Junior College
- Region 6 Education Service Center (ESC)

Consortium members, with the exception of Region 6 ESC, deliver service for adults and out-of-school youth in all counties of the region.

There are approximately 867,800 people, age 18 and over, who do not possess a high school diploma or equivalent and have less than a 9th grade education in the 13-county region (See Table 1 below for distribution of this population by county). In addition, 39% of the population speaks another language at home other than English. Of those that speak another language, 45% report that they speak English less than “very well.”

County	# residents without HS Diploma or Secondary Credential + Less than 9th Grade Education	% Population in 13-county region without HS Diploma or Secondary Credential + Less than 9th Grade Education
Austin	3,084	0.4%
Brazoria	34,827	4.0%
Chambers	4,382	0.5%
Colorado	3,055	0.4%
Fort Bend	54,534	6.3%
Galveston	29,667	3.4%
Harris	644,960	74.3%
Liberty	13,661	1.6%
Matagorda	6,430	0.7%
Montgomery	51,229	5.9%
Walker	8,822	1.0%
Waller	6,015	0.7%
Wharton	7,142	0.8%
TOTAL	867,808	100%

*Table 1: Population without a high school diploma or equivalent and less than a 9th grade education by county
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates)*

Note: Need for service will be considered, but will not be the sole criteria, for allocating funds under this RFP.

Expanding the Consortium

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board solicits qualified, locally-based agencies to expand the Consortium and to increase services for the Board and its operating affiliate, Workforce Solutions, in the following areas:

- **Career Pathways*** which include:
 - Integrated Education and Training (IET);
 - Work-based Projects or Workplace Literacy Programs in collaboration with employers;
 - Services for internationally trained ESL students (e.g. English literacy curriculum contextualized for internationally-trained professionals to a targeted career); and
 - Entrepreneurial training.
- **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education** service models designed to prepare adult English language learners for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or targeted occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

- **Transitions Classes** that offer students career and college planning, academic preparation, and transition services with the intent of student enrollment in postsecondary education or training.

Eligible Offerors may elect to serve the entire 13-county region or selected counties within the region. Offerors must serve selected counties in their entirety and must ensure that all county residents have access to all services.

The contract period for contracts awarded under this RFP is approximately nine (9) months from the contract start date. The anticipated contract start date is October 1, 2017.

* **Career Pathways** means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

- align with the skill needs of industries in the regional economy involved;
- prepare an individual to be successful in secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937;
- include counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- include, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as Workforce Preparation Activities and Training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- organize services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- enable an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and
- help an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

How It Works

Adult education providers will provide adult basic and secondary education, English literacy and civics concurrently with occupational skills training and workforce preparation for adults and out-of-school youth in the region. Providers must:

- Work with Workforce Solutions Career Offices to recruit and cross-refer customers wanting and needing adult education service.
- Work in local communities and with local community organizations and other agencies to attract customers wanting and needing adult education service. When appropriate, providers may enter into subcontractor agreements with other eligible entities to offer quality service and fulfill the expectations of the contract.
- Determine eligibility for the participants as well as obtain the necessary documentation that supports eligibility and maintain records in management information systems to include Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS) and Texas Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST).

- Ensure all participants register in WorkInTexas.com.
- Assess participants using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to determine a basic skills proficiency level and educational functioning level.
- Assist customers with goal-setting and developing actionable employment plans that describe the service they will provide and the expected results of higher skills, educational credentials and jobs.
- Where appropriate, arrange for paid work experience activities including internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships to help customers into full-time jobs in high-demand occupations.
- Work with other partners in the Workforce Solutions system to ensure the highest level of service for customers.

Successful Bidders

An eligible proposer for the Adult Education and Literacy services is a(n):

- Institution of Higher Education (IHE);
- Local Education Agency (LEA);
- Community-based organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- Volunteer literacy organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- Public or private nonprofit entity;
- Library;
- Public housing authority;
- Nonprofit institution that is not described above and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families; and
- Collaboration of the above entities with a designated lead organization.

Successful bidders will have demonstrated experience successfully working with and/or establishing cooperative relationships with local businesses, labor unions, economic development groups, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit and community-based organizations.

Proposals must demonstrate experience in effectively offering one or more of the following components:

- **Career Pathways** which include:
 - Integrated Education and Training (IET);
 - Work-based Projects or Workplace Literacy Programs in collaboration with employers;
 - Services for internationally trained ESL students (e.g. English literacy curriculum contextualized for internationally-trained professionals to a targeted career); and
 - Entrepreneurial training.

- **Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education** service models designed to prepare adult English language learners for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors or targeted occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.
- **Transitions Classes** that offer students career and college planning, academic preparation, and transition services with the intent of student enrollment in postsecondary education or training.

Successful bidders will be able to provide a Detailed Project Plan that will include, but is not limited to:

- A timeline for implementation of service indicating a start date for instruction and training **no later than October 31, 2017**;
- A strategy for collaborating with Workforce Solutions' partners and multiple community partners to effectively integrate adult education services into the workforce system, expand the services available to adult learners, and prevent duplication of services;
- A strategy for collaborating with employers and Workforce Solutions' Employer Services Division to develop and successfully execute career pathway models;
- A plan for recruiting, orienting, assessing, and retaining customers;
- A plan to assist customers' access to Workforce Solutions' partners so they can get a job, keep a job, get a better job, and/or enroll in postsecondary education and/or training;
- An outline for a continuous improvement process.

Successful bidders will be able to demonstrate capacity to work in multiple information management systems, e.g. The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST), Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS).

We are particularly interested in proposals that can effectively offer service in one or both of the following areas:

- Corrections – individuals, including youth, in correctional institutions or otherwise involved in the justice system;
- Distance learning – a formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time or both for the majority of the instructional period;

The Board is also particularly interested in proposals that offer service in the following counties: Austin, Colorado, Wharton, Matagorda, Waller, Chambers, Liberty and Walker Counties.

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 Assurances and certifications
- 6.0 Copy of organization's most recent audit and audited financial statements

Information About Your Organization

Provide the following information for us in a narrative that is no more than 10 pages:

- 1) Describe your organizational structure and why you think this structure is well-suited to fulfill the requirements of this RFP. Include whether the organization is an institution of higher education, public or private nonprofit organization, community-based organization, volunteer literacy organization, government entity, or another type of entity not listed here but with demonstrated experience offering the requested services.
- 2) Provide an organization chart indicating the flow of leadership/management in your organization.
- 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 that will be assigned to work on this proposed project. Identify principles and leaders in the organization, describing their responsibilities, experience, and length of service with your organization.
- 5) Include references from at least three organizations that have partnered/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).
- 6) Include letters of agreements with any employers that you plan to partner/contract with as part of this proposal. Agreements should clearly outline your roles and responsibilities, as well as those of the employer; disclose any resources contributed by the employer (e.g. staff, wages, classroom space, etc.); and be signed by an executive-level officer at your organization and the employer.
- 7) 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?

Information About Your Proposal

Provide the following information for us in a narrative that is no more than 16 pages:

- 1) Describe your organization's experience in helping adults obtain education and skills training, including degrees and other certifications, that better prepare them for high-demand jobs and/or transition into a post-secondary institution. Include your experience in the following areas (if applicable):
 - a. Outreach and recruitment to adults and out-of-school youth.
 - b. Assessment and intake. Please list the specific assessments you have used in the past and outline your process for testing and intake.
 - c. Goal-setting and career planning.
 - d. Customer/client retention rates and strategies.
 - e. Distance learning.
 - f. Corrections.
 - g. Working with/referring customers to Workforce Solutions Career Offices.
 - h. Working with employers and helping people prepare for employment opportunities.
 - i. Performance goals and applicable outcomes related to your programs. We are particularly interested in educational outcomes (i.e. enrollment, credential attainment and educational gains) as well as workforce outcomes (employment, retention, and wage gains).
- 2) Provide a detailed description of your project. Discuss how you will offer one or more of the following components (See "Purpose of this Request" for explanations of each).
 - a. Career Pathways
 - b. Integrated English Literacy and Civics
 - c. Transition to Post-Secondary

In addition, discuss how you will ensure each individual enrolled in your project will be provided ongoing support and service and how you will partner with Workforce Solutions Career Offices and other community partners to ensure that he or she is successful.
- 3) How would you use local labor market information to quickly develop integrated skills training classes to meet the ever-changing demands of Gulf Coast employers?
- 4) How would you implement an open enrollment or similar model to help interested students access adult education service as quickly as possible?
- 5) Describe the geographic area in which you will work and how you plan to outreach and recruit to customers residing and/or working in this area.
- 6) Describe your experience in tracking/reporting outcomes, including any experience using the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS), The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST), and WorkInTexas.com.
- 7) If your proposal includes a consortium, tell us who the member organizations 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.

Budget and Staffing

Use the Proposal Budget and Personnel forms provided 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 organization audit as well as audited financial statements.