



LACKAWANNA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

ONE-STOP OPERATOR FOR THE PA CAREERLINK® LACKAWANNA COUNTY

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, each locally designated Workforce Development Area must have at least one comprehensive One-Stop service center that provides services to employers and job seekers. Furthermore, the aforementioned legislation requires that a One-Stop Operator, hereinafter referred to as Operator, must be competitively procured by July 1, 2017. Within the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Area, there is one comprehensive One-Stop Center, d/b/a the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County, located at 135 Franklin Avenue in downtown Scranton, Pennsylvania 18503. To ensure compliance with the WIOA mandate, the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board, hereinafter referred to as WDB, is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Operator(s) to oversee the administration and provision of services at the Franklin Avenue site. This RFP has been prepared in accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 15-16, Workforce System Policy No. 121-04 (draft), Financial management Guide, and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

BACKGROUND:

The WIOA was passed in July of 2014, replacing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 which was the primary federal workforce development law for 16 years. Inherent in the new legislation is improved and seamless service delivery for both employers and job seekers through greater alignment of education, economic development, and workforce systems and resources. The WIOA calls for the continuation of the existing service delivery structure, the nation's network of one-stop career centers. In Pennsylvania, they are known as PA CareerLink® sites.

The Lackawanna County WDB is pleased to issue this request for proposals to identify an entity, consortium, or coalition of eligible organizations to serve as the Operator (as defined by WIOA Section 503) for management of the local site. The Operator role will be distinct from the roles of the direct providers of services at the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County. Those partner organizations that contribute to the operation of the local one-stop center through the Resource Sharing Agreement and Budget (RSAB) and Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will indirectly come under the direction of the Operator through the local center's Site Administrator who will provide functional supervision at the Site .

The Agreement with the organization(s) selected under this solicitation will begin on July 1, 2017.

LACKAWANNA COUNTY PROFILE:

Lackawanna County has been designated by the Governor of Pennsylvania as a single-County workforce area. The County comprises a total of 465 total land area with a population of 213,459, is primarily urban with rural pockets, 2 major cities (Scranton and Carbondale) and numerous smaller boroughs and townships. Approximately 28 % of the populations falls within the 45 to 64 age range with a median age of 42.5. In terms of educational attainment of persons age 25 and older (2016 Lackawanna County Data Book), 10.4% are less than high school graduates, 89.6% are high school graduates or higher, 25.7% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher, and 2.6% hold a professional or graduate degree.

Following the recent recession, Lackawanna County is on the upswing. The health care/bio sciences sector continues to dominate the landscape and is rapidly expanding. Logistics/warehousing continues to thrive due to the interconnected roadway system encompassing the 81/84/380 corridor. Manufacturing is experiencing a rebirth including the plastic sub-sector.

The prevalent challenges, across most sectors, facing both the County as well as the surrounding Northeast region of the Commonwealth, revolve around the following: an aging population/ "silver tsunami"; a declining labor force; an out-migration of young professionals; a substantial pool of qualified workers regardless of sector; a lack of soft skills in the worker pool; lack of technical skills; lack of transferable skills; and a lack of substantial industry in-migration.

The PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County is a large, comprehensive site with a myriad of partners and affiliates that provide a wide-range of services including, but not necessarily limited to: career counseling, job search/seeking assistance; employment-related workshops; testing and assessment; computer instruction; training options; one-on-one case management; Civil Service testing; educational referrals; provision of basic entrepreneurial information and referrals to the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC); and financial aid guidance. In addition, as strengthened by the WIOA, service to the business community has become a primary focus through an enhanced Business Services Team taking a pro-active approach to employer engagement.

Due to its centralized downtown location and accessibility from most areas by bus transportation, the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County is progressively evolving as the premier hub for employment and training services.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

Due to prior successful practices, the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board has selected the consortium model for oversight of the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County. A "consortium" is defined as non-federally mandated public and/or private entities, for-profit or non-profit organizations that, at a minimum, includes two (2) or more eligible entities. The following organizations/entities are eligible to apply as Operator under this RFP:

- Non-profit organizations;
- Community-based organizations;

- Institutions of higher education;
- Government agencies;
- For-profit entities;
- Workforce intermediaries;
- Non-traditional public secondary school(s); and
- Any interested organization that has the ability to carry out the duties of the one-stop operator.

The Operator will be accountable to the Lackawanna County WDB and the Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners (BOC), as Chief Elected Officials.

REQUIRED APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS:

The Lackawanna County WDB has established the following **Vision:** *To serve as a conduit for information and communication among stakeholders, promoting economic growth through strategic investment and leveraging of resources to increase career advancement opportunities and the competitive advantage of businesses in Lackawanna County and all of Northeastern Pennsylvania and to promote the **Mission** of a comprehensive and structurally sound workforce development system through human capital development, capacity building, and operational effectiveness.* The Lackawanna County WDB has engaged the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County as its operational arm as a vehicle for the provision of comprehensive workforce services to both the employer and job seeker communities.

A knowledge and understanding of the WIOA, applicable federal and state regulations, PA Department of Labor and Industry policies, and the region’s Local and Regional Plans is essential for selection. The selected operator should have a proven track record in the administration of projects and facility oversight.

The successful applicant must:

- be a consortium of eligible entities of no less than two (2). (See Eligible Applicants)
- Retain the current PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County Site Administrator. The Site Administrator shall remain an employee of his/her current employer. All conditions, approvals and requirements as set forth in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act(WIOA) of 2014, this paragraph, and the RFP and its entirety shall remain in full force and effect. The successful applicant shall be authorized to inform the Site Administrator and the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board of any and all complaints or concerns. The successful applicant shall be a functional supervisor to the Site Administrator.
- Present a proposal for a three (3) year period consisting of an initial contractual period commencing on July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018, with an option, based on successful performance, to renew the contract annually for a total of three years.

Note: The Site Administrator shall keep the successful Operator informed of day-to-day operations and any/all complaints and concerns. In the event of death, disability, resignation,

or retirement of the currently appointed Site Administrator, the Lackawanna County WDB and the Operator shall collectively agree in the selection of a new Site Administrator.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

For the purposes of this RFP, the expected available funding to support the selected Operator (Consortium) will be \$4,000. It is expected that the selected Operator will leverage other funding, if needed, to support its activities and, ultimately, improve the public workforce system. Staff of the Lackawanna County WDB and the Site Administrator will provide administrative support and guidance to the selected Operator. Funding to cover the cost of the Site Administrator's salary and benefits, along with facility operations costs, will be included in the partner-approved Resource Sharing Agreement Budget (RSAB)

OPERATOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Under the leadership of the Lackawanna County WDB, and with the guidance from the Board's PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County's Standing Workforce Delivery Sub-Committee, the selected Operator will be tasked with the coordination of the following services:

- Ensure a seamless delivery of services.
- Provide oversight to the assigned Site Administrator in the following areas:
 - organization and coordination of all co-located partner staff by function in accordance with State and/or provider personnel rules; collective bargaining agreements, if applicable; and other specific partner policy and guidance.
 - establishment of a customer-friendly service delivery model.
 - development of operational procedures and protocols that promotes effective seamless service delivery to ensure positive program outcomes.
 - communication of workforce system policy that effects overall Center operations.
 - establishment of internal policies and procedures for situations such as inclement weather; holidays, as allowed by partner entity, etc.
 - ensures an effective partner referral mechanism is in place for the benefit of both the individual customer as well as partner performance.
 - act as an ambassador of the One-Stop Center in the community.
 - provides a bridge to business services and resources.
 - assures that relevant policies and procedures including equal opportunity and civil rights measures are enforced.
 - recommends and retires technological tools and services needed for the operation of the One-Start Center.
- Serve in the capacity of an intermediary with all the One-Stop partners.
- Recognize and understand the parameters under which the individual partners provide services including partner-specific performance measures.
- Schedule One-Stop Partner meetings (minimum quarterly).
- Prepare a meeting Agenda for distribution prior to the set meeting date.
- In-person facilitation of the Operator meeting.
- Prepare and distribute any/all required meeting materials.

- Prepare and distribute post-meeting minutes.
- Assist the Local Board in preparation of compliance measures for One-Stop Center Certification to ensure continued receipt of infrastructure funding.
- Approve the expenditure of earned income. Provide recommendation for approval of internal operational services (i.e., security services, disbursement of any earned income; disbursement of any RSAB costs in excess of \$500.00, etc.) to the Lackawanna County WDB.
- Track and implement the negotiated One-Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The success of the Operator Consortium, comprised of eligible entities who have a vested interest in the public workforce system at the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County site, will be its ability to work cooperatively with the Local Workforce Development Board, the workforce delivery system standing committee, and the Site Administrator. All members of the Operator Consortium must be decision-making level representatives. The successful Operator will need to work closely with all partners in order to implement service delivery that fosters an integrated service model. The Operator will need to inspire others and lead change; demonstrate extremely high levels of professionalism, integrity, and collaboration; and enhance and develop partnerships.

Adjustments to the aforementioned may be made following input from the Board's PA CareerLink® Standing Sub-Committee and consideration by the Lackawanna County WDB.

The following functions MAY NOT be performed by the One-Stop Operator:

- Convene system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan;
- Preparation of the local plan (as required under WIOA Section 107);
- Be responsible for oversight of itself;
- Manage or significantly participate in the competitive selection process of the One-Stop Operator;
- Select or terminate One-Stop Operator, career services provider, or youth provider;
- Negotiate local performance accountability measures; and
- Develop and submit budgets for activities of the local WDB.

The selected Operator must disclose any potential conflict of interest arising from the relationship of the Operator with Lackawanna County WDB approved training service providers.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE:

Address the following in the proposal response:

- Detailed description of the proposing consortium, describing, in-depth, the intent to which oversight/expertise will be applied;
- Knowledge of workforce system strategies and the local PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County operations;

- Awareness of employer-based approaches for industry growth;
- Related experience in addressing continuous improvement and performance measures in parent company/organization(s);
- Related leadership qualities;
- Budget and budget narrative;
- Budgetary or financial development/oversight experience; and
- Why your organization or consortium of entities is well positioned to serve in the capacity of One-Stop Operator.

RELATIONSHIP OF OPERATOR TO THE LACKAWANNA COUNTY WDB AND PA CAREERLINK® PARTNERS:

The Lackawanna County WDB proposes payment in the amount not to exceed \$4,000 through a contractual Agreement with the selected Operator (one lead entity) in accordance with described One-Stop Operator Roles and Responsibilities. The Lackawanna County WDB, through its Fiscal Agent, the County of Lackawanna, will incur a contractual relationship through an Agreement with the selected Operator. The WDB will provide on-going policy guidance and strategic direction to ensure that the Board’s vision and performance expectations remain in the forefront and are addressed. The Lackawanna County WDB is also responsible for performance monitoring and will perform periodic quantitative, qualitative, and on-site reviews of operator performance to ensure that expectations are being met.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Lackawanna County WDB staff will assist in the provision of accurate and timely data affording the Operator the ability to make data-driven decisions to improve site performance and customer and client satisfaction.

CONTRACT PERIOD:

The anticipated timeframe for the Agreement that will be awarded from this RFP is July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018, with an option, based on successful performance, to renew the contract each year thereafter for a total of three (3).

TIMELINE:

- Release of RFP: April 19, 2017
- Bidders’ questions to be received by email to vturano@wiblackawanna.org by 4:30 PM on Monday, April 24, 2017
- Answers to submitted questions will be provided electronically to those who submitted questions by 4:30 PM on Wednesday, April 26, 2017
- Proposals are due by 4:00 PM on Friday, May 12, 2017
- Opening/initial review of all proposals received: Monday, May 15, 2017
- Proposal review and selection: May 16, 2017 to June 2, 2017
- Award of Contract: June 8, 2017

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE AND REQUIRED INFORMATION

The proposal to this request must contain the following:

- Description of proposing entities forming the consortium (minimum of two).
- Proposing entities identification numbers (EIN).
- Proposing entities names.
- Proposing entities addresses.
- Proposing entities contact person(s), including email address.
- Applicable contact telephone number(s) for each proposing entity.
- Identification of lead entity for contracting purposes.

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must include the following information arranged in the order shown:

- **Title page:** identifying the proposer’s names, addresses, telephone numbers, contact persons, and email addresses.
- **Organizational Profile:** information found under the “Organizational Profile and Required Information” section.
- **Proposal Narrative:** address all bullets in the “Proposal Narrative” section, taking into consideration the “Operator Roles and Responsibilities” as defined herein. This section must not exceed eight (8) pages.
- **Proposal Submission:** Proposals in response to this RFP are due by **4:00 PM on Friday, May 12, 2017**. Five (5) hard copies must be submitted and received by this date to:

Mr. Andrew Wallace
Lackawanna County Chief of Staff
200 Adams Avenue, 6th Floor
Scranton, PA 18503

In addition, an electronic copy must be submitted to Virginia Turano at vturano@wiblackawanna.org by the 4:00 PM deadline on May 12, 2017. Late submissions (either mailed, hand-delivered, or emailed) will not be reviewed.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

All submitted proposals will be opened by the Lackawanna County Chief of Staff, or assigned designee(s). The initial screening of proposals will be performed by the Lackawanna County Chief of Staff, or designated staff, to ensure that submissions are responsive to this solicitation, conform to its requirements and are acceptable for full review. A standard initial screening instrument will be utilized. Any proposal not meeting all of the specified minimum standards will be considered non-responsive and will be given no further consideration. Proposals meeting all of the specified minimum standards will be forwarded to the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Director for disbursement to the WDB Procurement Review Sub-Committee for a full review and evaluation. Subsequently, the Procurement Review Sub-Committee will make a recommendation to the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee for appointment of an Operator. The WDB Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the WDB, will make the final Operator selection.

For the purposes of this RFP, the following criteria will be evaluated:

- Proposer’s understanding of the requirements of the Operator and the public workforce system in the Lackawanna County area and demonstrated capabilities to provide comprehensive oversight as defined in this RFP;
- Succinct definition of proposer or composition of consortium. If consortium, defined lead and roles and responsibilities of each partner;
- Leveraged resources, if any , that the proposer brings to the role of Operator; and
- Complete and comprehensive responses to the required sections of this RFP;

The Board’s recommendations will then be taken to the Lackawanna County BOC for contracting purposes. During each step of the review and approval process, members will be informed of potential conflicts of interest and meeting minutes will reflect the voting outcome and any abstentions.

The Lackawanna County WDB is the responsible authority for handling complaints or protests regarding the proposal selection process. No protests shall be accepted by the State grantor Agency (PA Department of Labor and Industry) until all administrative remedies at the grantee (Lackawanna WDB) level have been exhausted. This includes, but is not limited to, disputes, claims, protests of award, source evaluation or other matters of a contractual nature. Matters concerning violations of law shall be referred to such authority as may have proper jurisdiction.

The Lackawanna County WDB would like to have the opportunity to respond to any inquiry or resolve any dispute prior to the filing of an official complaint by the protester. It is the policy of the Lackawanna County WDB that all actual or prospective bidders, respondents, offerors, or sub-recipients who believe they are aggrieved by the solicitation of this RFP be offered administrative adjudication. The following outlines the specific appeal process to be used:

Step 1: Advise the Lackawanna County WDB Administrative Officer of Complaint

Any party that believes it is aggrieved should seek resolution of their complaint(s) initially with the Lackawanna County WDB Administrative Officer. Such complaint(s) must be made in writing and submitted via mail or email to the following:

Virginia H. Turano
Executive Director
Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board
Scranton Enterprise Center
201 Lackawanna Avenue Suite 215
Scranton, PA 18503
vturano@wiblackawanna.org

Any/all complaint(s) received will be forwarded to the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee for review and response determination. The protestor(s) will receive a written notification within fifteen (15) calendar days of the WDB's receipt of the protest detailing the determination. In the event that the resolution at this initial Step 1 is not accomplished or feasible, the Lackawanna County WDB will advise the party initiating the complaint(s) in writing to proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Filing of protest with Lackawanna County WDB Administrative Office

Formal protest shall be made in writing to the Lackawanna County WDB Administrative Officer within 15 calendar days after the date of the written notice to the protestor from the Lackawanna County WDB to proceed to Step 2.

Protests filed after fifteen (15) calendar days, as specified above, will not be considered.

Written protests shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

- The name and address of the protester
- Clear indication that the communication is a formal, written protest/appeal
- Appropriate identification of the procurement which was the basis of the solicitation or award in question
- A statement of reasons for the protest
- Supporting exhibits, evidence, or documents to substantiate any claims

The Administrative Officer, acting on behalf of the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee, may request additional information from the protester who shall submit the information within time periods set forth at the time of the request(s).

When a protest has been properly filed, the Lackawanna County WDB Administrative Officer shall notify the Lackawanna County BOC not to contract until the protest has been settled, unless, after consultation with the Fiscal Agent, the Administrative Officer determines that the award of contract/agreement without delay is necessary to protect substantial interests of the Workforce Development Area.

Step 3: Subsequent Review by the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee

The Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee will reconvene, with the participation of the staff to the WDB, to conduct an oral briefing with properly designated representatives of the protesting party at which time the facts upon which a Lackawanna County WDB decision was made will be explained and discussed with the protesting party's representatives.

Following the oral briefing and a duly designated representative of the Lackawanna County BOC, decisions on protests/appeals shall be rendered and conveyed in writing to the party who has filed the protest on behalf of the Lackawanna County WDB within ten (10) calendar days.

Step 4: Referral to office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

If the protest cannot be resolved through Steps 1 through 3 above, the issue will be referred to the Governor's office for resolution by the authorized representative of the Governor. Decisions so rendered are considered final and binding upon all partners.