

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Date Issued:

March 21, 2011
RFP # ECO1-SFY11

**Due 1:30 p.m.
Tues. April 19, 2011**

Bidders must submit three (3) hard copies and one (1) electronic copy (CD) in Microsoft Word (budget in Microsoft Excel) proposal copies and CD must be in a sealed envelope entitled:

**Employment & Training Centers of East Central Ohio Youth RFP
Licking County Commissioners Office
c/o Commissioners Clerk
Bev Adzic, 20 S. 2nd Street 4th Floor,
Newark, Ohio 43055**

NOTE: Three (3) hard copies and CD must be received by the submission date in order to be considered.

Bidders' Conference

10:00 a.m.
March 28, 2011
Licking County Opportunity Links,
998 East Main Street,
Newark, Ohio 43055
OR
2:00 p.m.
April 4th, 2011
Muskingum County County Opportunity Center
503 Main Street
Zanesville, Ohio 43701

**Submit questions in advance to
carnaa@odjfs.state.oh.us
prior to March 28, 2011**

Employment & Training Centers of East Central Ohio WIA Youth Services

Purpose

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) emphasizes employment and training services to adults, youth, and dislocated workers. The Employment & Training Centers of East Central Ohio (herein referred to as East Central), is currently soliciting Proposals for vendors to implement year-round youth programming in Licking, Coshocton, Muskingum, and Guernsey Counties. Providers may elect to submit proposals to serve one or multiple counties within the East Central region.

WIA provides local communities with the framework for creating comprehensive and effective strategies to serve at-risk youth as they transition into the world of work. The East Central One Stop region recognizes the importance of providing our youth services to assist them in becoming self-sufficient and productive employees, citizens, and community leaders.

The purpose of Youth Programs under WIA is:

“to provide, to eligible youth seeking assistance in achieving academic and employment success, effective and comprehensive activities, which shall include a variety of options for improving educational and skill competencies and provide effective connections to employers; to ensure on-going mentoring opportunities for eligible youth with adults committed to providing such opportunities;

- to provide opportunities for training to eligible youth;*
- to provide continued supportive services for eligible youth;*
- to provide incentives for recognition and achievement to eligible youth; and*
- to provide opportunities for eligible youth in activities related to leadership development.”*

Background

Licking, Coshocton, Muskingum, and Guernsey Counties have joined together, forming a regional One Stop System called the Employment & Training Centers of East Central Ohio. This system is part of the Area 7 Workforce Investment Board which consists of the Ohio Area 7 Consortium of Chief Elected Officials as the WIA grant recipient, and the Area 7 Workforce Investment Policy Board as the administrative entity. Each County Department of Job and Family Services is responsible for the administration of the Workforce Investment Act in their respective counties.

The East Central region is seeking proposals to provide employment and training services required to serve WIA eligible youth in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local rules, regulations and policies. The Request for Proposal (RFP) is to provide prospective vendors/contractors with the information they need to prepare proposals that are complete and responsive.

The East Central region reserves the right to limit total program funding and/or the number of programs approved for WIA funding based on available resources. Providers may elect to submit proposals to serve one or multiple counties under the East Central region.

Eligible Population

WIA guidelines are defined at the State and Federal levels, with some options at the local level. WIA serves youth ages 14 to 21. Legislation requires targeting in-school and out-of-school youth. The provider will need to specify if their program will serve in-school, and/or out-of-school youth.

In general, families must fall at or below the poverty level to be eligible for WIA intensive services and eligible participants must have at least one of the following identified barriers:

- Deficient in basic literacy skills
- School dropout
- Homeless or runaway
- Licking County foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- Offender
- Faces serious barriers to employment.

Income eligibility may vary for youth with identified disabilities.

By law, a minimum of thirty (30) percent of WIA youth funds must be spent on out-of-school youth. Out-of-school youth, by definition, are:

- Youth ages 19 to 21 who have graduated or no longer attend high school
- Youth under age 18 who have dropped out of high school
- Youth enrolled in home schooling programs.

In-school youth are defined as youth ages 14-21 and still enrolled in secondary school.

Income limits are found as Attachment D of this RFP. Youth/families must meet designated income and resource guidelines to be determined eligible for services. Eligibility is determined by the respective East Central staff. Eligibility determination includes verification of income for all household members, including earned and unearned income. The provider must collect all data required for WIA eligibility with final approval for enrollment to be determined by the appropriate East Central representative

Providers will be responsible for identifying and recruiting the population to be served by the proposed program. Other agencies, including County Department of Job and Family Services, may refer potential participants to youth programs, if applicable.

Program Requirements

Per WIA Title I, Section 129 (c)(1) General program requirements include:

- A. Out of school youth who are basic skills deficient must receive an objective assessment of academic levels, skill levels, and service needs. This assessment shall also include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs of each participant. (A new assessment is not required if an assessment was conducted as part of another WIA program within the previous 12 months.)
- B. Development of service strategies for each participant that identifies an employment goal, achievement, objectives, and services using the information obtained in the assessment. (A new service strategy is not needed if a service strategy was developed as part of another WIA program within the previous 12 months.)
- C. Youth must receive preparation for postsecondary education opportunities as appropriate
- D. Providers will be required to link academic and occupational learning
- E. Providers must prepare youth for unsubsidized employment opportunities when appropriate
- F. Providers must provide linkages to the job market including local and regional employers.

In addition to the general program requirements, the Workforce Investment Act outlines the following CORE ELEMENTS for youth programming [WIA 129 (c) (2)]. *Preference will be given to those proposals which integrate all core elements into program design and strategy. CORE ELEMENTS can be provided directly by the provider or indirectly through sub-contracts or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with other service providers.*

1. Tutoring and Study Skills Training: Leading to secondary school completion, including drop out prevention strategies
 2. Alternative secondary school offerings (eg. GED)
 3. Summer Employment Opportunities: Programs must provide academic and occupational learning opportunities directly linked to the summer employment opportunity.
 4. Paid and unpaid work experiences: Work experience is planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a private for-profit, non-profit, or public sector workplace for a limited period of time.
 5. Occupational skills training
-

6. Leadership development: Includes community services and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours. Can also include decision making, teamwork, and citizenship activities.
7. Supportive services: Transportation, child care, dependant care, etc. WIA funds can be used to provide supportive services.
8. Adult mentoring for at least twelve (12) months (may be during or after program participation)
9. Follow-Up Services: REQUIRED for at least 12 months following exit
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling: drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, etc., – appropriate to the needs of the individual

Note: Providers that propose to provide paid work experiences, and summer employment opportunities will be considered the employer of record, therefore responsible for all payroll and payroll related expenses including Medicaid, Social Security and Workers Compensation. Youth must be paid minimum wage or higher. The provider will be responsible to follow minor wage agreements and posting requirements, obtaining I9 forms, parent consent forms and work permits for minors.

Providers are encouraged to establish partnerships with local businesses. Work site agreements are required to be in place prior to youth starting employment (including obtaining cooperative agreements with existing bargaining agreements if applicable). WIA youth program participants can not displace or jeopardize the status of current employees.

The provider will be required to work closely with appropriate East Central WIA case management staff to communicate performance, progress towards goals, and any other information pertinent to the progress of the youth and as necessary to be entered into the state tracking system (SCOTI).

The provider must have a process for collecting/evaluating their clients' satisfaction with all aspects of the program to ensure needs are being met and report results to the appropriate WIA case management staff.

The WIA prohibits the use of funds for the following purposes:

- 1) The Act will not allow WIA funds to be used to develop or implement educational curricula for school systems.
- 2) WIA funds may not be used for designated school-to-work programs.
- 3) In-school youth programs or activities may not interfere with or replace regular academic requirements of youth.

The East Central region strongly encourages the development of proposals that leverage existing resources and expand upon successful youth programs currently operating within the community.

Performance Criteria

WIA Youth Performance Standards:

Performance Measure	Negotiated Standard
Placement in Employment or Education	63%
Attainment of a Degree or Certificate	42%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains (for out of school youth who are basic skills deficient)	37%

Note: Performance standards indicated will be monitored on a regular basis. Failure to meet the standard(s) may result in a modification of the contract. Provider must issue a corrective action plan (CAP) for any failed standard(s) and the plan must be approved by the appropriate East Central entity. If approved CAP is not effective in resolving the performance issues, and no other solution can be identified, the contract could be terminated.

Reporting of all WIA Youth performance will be required by **PROVIDER** to respective East Central staff.

Partnerships

Both the Workforce Investment Act and the East Central Region encourage partnering and collaboration to deliver the most effective services to have the greatest possible community impact. If your proposal involves a partnership, provide a letter of agreement generally outlining the partnership and the activities or services of each of the partners. Before funding, partnerships will have to be firmly established by means of formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or subcontract. The MOU/subcontract, whether developed as an umbrella agreement with a variety of agencies, or independently with a particular partner must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

- ◆ A description of what services will be provided by each partner.
- ◆ How the costs of services and operating costs of the partnership will be funded.
- ◆ Method of referral between partners.
- ◆ Duration of the Memorandum and procedures for amending the Memorandum.
- ◆ Other provisions as agreed upon by the parties to the MOU.

EAST CENTRAL AND PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The East Central contracting entity is responsible for:

- Providing technical assistance to WIA youth programs in their respective counties
- Providing assistance and training with the eligibility process
- Providing an objective assessment (eg. TABE 9/10), as needed
- Monitoring and reviewing program performance in relationship to program and participant goals
- Providing case management to ensure program participants achieve goals as identified in the Individual Service Plan
- Reimbursing WIA service providers in an efficient and timely manner
- Entering pertinent WIA information for ongoing tracking and monitoring of youth participants in the SCOTI System.

The Provider is responsible for:

- Outreach, recruitment, and enrollment of youth
- Providers must assess youth to determine deficiency and service need of each youth, based upon the ten core services listed on pages 4 & 5 of the RFP
- Providers must have a process of collecting/evaluating their clients' satisfaction with all aspects of the program and to insure all needs are being met
- Out of school youth who are basic skills deficient must receive an objective assessment. The objective assessment must at a minimum include basic skills.
- All youth must have a Individual Service Strategy
- Providers must accommodate testing to assess basic skills as needed.
- Each participant enrolled in training services must have an Individual Service Plan developed in accordance with WIA requirements. This will be included and made part of any other plan developed by the provider.
- Provider must work collaboratively with the WIA youth case manager regarding participant progress toward goals
- Providers will also be required to submit expense reports monthly or quarterly as negotiated (Attachment C)
- Provider is responsible to hire qualified program staff and provide appropriate background checks for individuals working with the youth program. Youth program volunteers are expected to meet the same background standards as paid employees.
- Providing participant follow up for not less than 12 months after program completion. Follow up consists of but is not limited to:
 - Periodic group or one-on-one meetings to discuss educational and career options
 - Periodic phone calls to inform youth of ongoing job opportunities or career activities
 - Ongoing mentoring or tutoring services

Providers will be responsible for submitting follow up reports (monthly or quarterly as negotiated) on each participant receiving WIA services. (Attachment B).

Proposal Contents

I. PROGRAM NARRATIVE that includes:

- 1) Provider name, program name
 - a) contact person, address, phone number fax number & email address
 - a. List the East Central county(ies) you propose serving
- 2) Name and description of program/services being proposed
 - b. Issues/problems proposed service will address
 - c. How the service will be delivered
- 3) Who will be served/target population? (must include at least one of the identified barriers as listed on page 3). How many youth will be served?
- 4) Will the program serve in-school youth, out-of-school youth, or both?
- 5) Expected outcomes
 - a) How the program will meet all of the ten core elements of WIA youth programming.
 - b) The US Department of Labor has outlined specific performance measures for WIA youth. Please address how your program will assist with meeting the following performance measures:
 - Placement in Employment or Education*
 - Education Attainment of a Degree or Certificate*
 - Literacy and Numeracy Gains (for out of school youth who are basic skills deficient)*
 - c) How will the program meet the Program Requirements listed on page 4
- 6) Follow up services:
 - a) The WIA requires some form of follow-up services for a minimum of twelve (12) months after a youth has exited a WIA youth program. Therefore, Providers should address possible methods for follow-up, which may include (but are not limited to):
 - i) Periodic group or one-on-one meetings to discuss educational and career options
 - ii) Periodic phone calls to inform youth of ongoing job opportunities or career activities
 - iii) Ongoing mentoring or tutoring services
 - iv) Ongoing community service opportunities
- 7) Program monitoring and evaluation process, including customer satisfaction surveys
- 8) Program time lines (Start date, length of project, etc.)

- 9) Collaborative efforts, as defined under Partnerships on page 6 of this RFP, including additional funding sources. Include letters of agreement.
- 10) Provider qualifications and previous experience in the delivery of such services, including qualification of Provider's staff and volunteers. (program volunteers must at minimum meet the same background standards as paid employees)
- 11) Potential sources for future funding

II. PROGRAM BUDGET

- 1) Provide a detailed line item budget that includes identification of costs, per selected area (e.g., salary, benefits, income source, projected purchases, etc.). See the Budget Template (Attachment A) for preparing the line-item budget. Budgets should start no earlier than July 1, 2011 and end no later than June 30, 2012.
- 2) Provide a corresponding budget narrative explaining each line item expense
- 3) Should the Proposal involve existing services, please identify how WIA funds will be utilized to expand services and current program income sources.

WIA funding is based upon a reimbursement process for services delivered. The provider will be expected to provide an expense report (monthly or quarterly) for reimbursement (Attachment C).

RFP LIMITATIONS

This Request for Proposals does not commit counties of East Central to award contracts or to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal. Licking, Coshocton, Muskingum and Guernsey County Departments of Department of Job and Family Services reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals to serve their respective county, to negotiate services and costs with Providers, and to cancel in part or in entirety this RFP.

All Proposals submitted will remain the property of the East Central Region and each respective county Department of Job and Family Services.

East Central Ohio Opportunity Center reserves the right to limit total program funding and/or the number of programs approved for WIA funding based on available resources.

Contracts awarded shall not be effective beyond June 30, 2012. However, the East Central Region reserves the right to renew WIA youth contracts for up to two (2) consecutive years (through June 30, 2014) based on successful performance, availability of funds, and if East Central and respective county Departments of Job and Family Services warrants such renewal. Renewals will be based upon mutual agreement of both parties.

Contracts may be amended or terminated during this period if there is a change in Federal, State or Agency regulations that apply to the contract; a reduction of Federal, State or Local funds; unsatisfactory performance by the Provider as determined by the East Central Region; or upon thirty (30) days written notice by either party.

If a contract is awarded, this RFP guideline shall become a part of the contractual agreement.

Proposal Scoring

Prospective Providers are advised that an offer for a contract may be initiated after a review of the proposal by the East Central Proposal Review Team and respective County Department of Job and Family Services. Proposals will be reviewed for acceptability with emphasis on various factors according to the type of service to be provided. Proposals will be reviewed by the East Central Proposal Review team and evaluated on the following criteria:

POINTS	APPLICANT RESPONSE	SCORE	COMMENTS
Max = 3	Issue which this program/service will address is clearly explained and meets a demonstrated need (includes prevalence, frequency, short and long term effects)		
Max = 3	The proposal clearly addresses the ten core elements and identifies how all ten elements will be provided		
Max = 3	The proposal gives a detailed profile of the target population and specifies in-school or out-of-school youth		
Max=3	Proposal demonstrates ability to recruit and enroll eligible participants		
Max = 3	Program description addresses HOW, WHEN, WHERE services will be provided.		
Max =3	The proposal identifies sound methods to assist with tracking and meeting identified performance measures		
Max =3	Proposal outlines strategies for follow up services of participants for not less than 12 months.		
Max = 3	Proposal demonstrates previous experience in delivering proposed services to the target population and demonstrates staff and volunteer qualifications		
Max= 3	Proposal has identified specific goals and corresponding evaluation/ monitoring strategies which are appropriate and sound		
Max = 3	Outcomes are realistic and clearly specified		
Max = 3	Budget: Detailed individual cost sections and narrative complete and accurate		
Max = 3	Program/service costs are deemed appropriate & reasonable		
Max = 3	Proposal leverages funds and/or expands existing, successful programs		
Max = 3	Proposal developed in partnership with other entities, and includes letter of agreement (s)		
Max=3	Program proposes to serve out of school youth		
Max 45	TOTAL POINTS		

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions concerning this RFP may be directed to:

Angela Carnahan, Program Planner
Licking County Department of Job and Family Services
carnaa@odjfs.state.oh.us
(740) 670-8857