

## **March 7, 2019 WIOA RFP Bidders' Conference Q&A**

Questions submitted ahead of time were organized in a power point by RFP (four RFP's total), with time during each for day-of questions. A few general questions are answered at the beginning, and remaining questions at the end.

### **Overview**

- Q: Is the timeline firm, or can bidders propose a longer contract term in order to meet deliverables?
  - A: The timeline is firm. Contracts may be extended up to two times (three years total), but proposals must focus on the one-year contract term for which they are bidding.
- Q: Is the budget narrative required in the 15-page narrative?
  - A: Yes, the budget narrative is required and counts toward the 15-page limit.
- Q: In the WorkSource Campus hours of operation, the day after Thanksgiving is designated as closed to the public but open to staff. Will staff be required to work that day even if that day is a holiday at their agency?
  - A: If your organization offers that day as a holiday, staff do not have to work that day.
- Q: When specifying that all work for this contract must be performed at, and in service to, the WorkSource Campus, are staff located at Fairchild AFB included in the WorkSource campus, or do they have to be funded separately?
  - A: Yes, Fairchild is considered part of WorkSource Spokane, and you can include that as part of your proposal. We welcome you including staff located there as part of a functional team. Leveraged funding is also allowable.

### **WorkSource Campus Operations:**

- Clarifications:
  - Separate proposals must be submitted for each operator position (up to three proposals).
  - We want one person to serve in the role of each operator (three individuals). We are not accepting consortium models for this role.
  - If you want to propose a different model, you may. However, you must address how you will mitigate conflict of interest, whether perceived or real, and how someone can successfully serve in multiple roles.
- Q: What is the correct terminology for the EnVision center? Has the name changed?
  - A: Please use the term "Spokane Resource Center" going forward. We will not be modifying the RFP's to reflect the new name, and we will not penalize proposals that reference EnVision Center, but the name has officially changed, and we ask people to refer to the center as the Spokane Resource Center going forward.
- Q: If the WorkSource Operator functionally supervises the Talent Solutions Manager, should a portion of the operator's salary be costed in the Talent Solutions budget?
  - A: No, we accounted for this design in our budgeting process. They are funded separately.
- Q: If the SWC is not awarded city funding how might the SRC operator role be redefined?
  - A: If that occurs, we would work with the city at that time to determine options going forward.

- Q: Is there an option in the operator model to have the WorkSource operator functionally supervise other operators?
  - A: Yes, we specified options for a lead operator role, which would fit that model.
- Q: Do you want the original questions included with answers in the proposals, or just answers?
  - A: Yes, please include the questions. Members of our board will review proposals and including questions will help ensure proper context and consistency during review.
- Q: Can we submit in a smaller font?
  - A: Make sure it is legible.
- Q: For the 15-page limit, does that include the executive summary and the budget?
  - A: Proposals will have three parts: the executive summary (one page), the narrative which includes the budget narrative (15 pages maximum), and the budget detail, which does not have a page limit. The page limit for the narrative ensures consistent review by our board members and encourages bidders to describe their work concisely.

**WorkSource System Talent Solutions RFP:**

- Clarifications:
  - A consortium model means that two or more agencies work together to submit one proposal.
  - This is WorkSource *System* Talent Solutions, which is broader than the WorkSource Campus. This team needs to incorporate services for all affiliated and connection sites in the whole county. The intent is to create a team that delivers services to local businesses so well that they are recognized as a national leader in talent solutions.
  - Talent Solutions staff will have shared branding, including email addresses, business cards, etc. This means that individual agency email addresses will not be used by team members at the Talent Solutions Center.
  - The Talent Solution Center does not have a firm open date, but we are pushing to open in April. So, the site will be running before July 1, when this contract starts.
- Q: We would be looking at partially aligning the Talent Solutions team members we directly supervise parallel to the agency framework/strategic mission because the missions are complimentary. This means we would be looking at working with our own supervised Talent Solutions Team members on a back and forth client referral service which would complement one another's focus areas. Is this something we need prior approval on before submitting a proposal?
  - A: All Talent Solutions staff will be functionally supervised by the team manager and will work towards a single goal. Leveraged funding may be used to support other work that aligns with the team mission but must be approved by the team manager and WorkSource operator. WIOA Title I funding cannot be used to support individual agency goals.
- Q: We would potentially seek to hire a shared Client Resource Coordinator/Communications Specialist who would assist with office support, helping coordinate service agreements for both teams, and fielding calls/communications while the Talent Team and our own Contracting Team were busy performing services. Is this possible? If so, are we allowed to provide outside office placement for this staff member?

- A: This funding is available to support the manager and staff located at the Talent Solutions Center, so outside office placement is not permissible.
- Q: Based upon our experience having done this sort of work in the past, your proposed timeframes for the contract and goal completions are way too short. Can we propose expanding the contract offering to a minimum of 24 months at \$305,000 per awarded year?
  - A: We agree the goals are aggressive and as such we are seeking the most qualified team possible for this contract; however, this funding is not available for longer than 12 months. We do have the ability to renew contracts up to two times before re-opening to bid, but we cannot guarantee what funding will be available in the future.
- Q: Can our response be a three-year vision, or does it have to be just a 12-month vision? Is there any need to write to a contingency if the funding ended at the 12-month mark?
  - A: We think our perspective should always be long-term. While proposals do need to focus on the 12-month timeline specified in the RFP, it is unlikely that we will cut funding at the 12-month mark. We have never done so in the past, so there is no need to include a contingency plan. We do understand that these goals are aggressive, but we are seeking a highly skilled team that can achieve the goals stated in the RFP in the timeline stated. If you want to suggest future goals for years 2 and 3, you are welcome to do that.
- Q: For the consortium model, could two difference colleges (SFCC and SCC) count as two different agencies?
  - If you wish to propose that option, you will need to make the case that the two are considered distinct entities and could come together as a consortium (distinct structures, licenses, etc.). Knowing that Community Colleges of Spokane is one district, you would need to argue the case that it could be considered two distinct entities.

### **WorkSource Service Providers**

- Clarifications:
  - Our goal is to create an employer-driven one-stop center.
  - The WIOA funding available under this RFP represents approximately 25% of the overall WorkSource budget.
  - We will be requiring unified branding, including email addresses, that is not agency-specific (e.g., @worksourcespokane.org).
- Q: Can a different model than ISD be proposed?
  - A: No, the Integrated Service Delivery model is the required model for this contract. Although it is possible a better model exists, this is the best model that we have identified through research, and it is the required model through the life of the contract.
- Q: Can a different model than functional supervision be proposed?
  - A: We do not see a way that the ISD model can be successful without utilizing functional supervision. However, you are welcome to propose another model if you can ensure that it would work in the functional teams atmosphere of ISD.
- Q: Page 17, bullet 3, regarding recruiting potential students. Can you elaborate on what you mean by the last sentence?
  - A: To ensure WorkSource is employer-focused, the continuous engagement team (CET) will meet business needs by recruiting students for SWC-targeted trainings and courses

using various methods, e.g. maintaining an interest/skill inventory of CET-enrolled customers, outreach to UI customers, outreach to affiliated sites, marketing, etc.

- Q: Please clarify – students you are recruiting would not necessarily have to be registered into Title I training?
  - Only if WorkSource is helping to fund the training. It might make sense to have them enrolled at the Individualized level in order to support students throughout class and increase success.
- Q: Do you want us to propose email addresses for staff?
  - A: That is not required, but it would be fine to submit suggestions.
- Q: Do you want us to submit an org chart that shows funding streams and how they would flow together?
  - A: You may, but it is not required. An org chart would apply to the 15-page limit.

### **Next Gen Service Providers:**

- Clarifications:
  - Budgets do not need to include the Next Gen Zone operator position – that is covered in the other RFP.
  - Funding can be used to support program management and staff.
- Q: How do you define short-term when it applies to Mental Health Services?
  - A: 2-4 months is what we envision. Anything longer than that would be considered an off-site referral.
- Q: For the sublease at Next Gen Zone, would there still be the additional rent for the GED classroom on the third floor?
  - A: The dollar amount is for WIOA funding only. Other sublease agreements with other entities will not be affected.
- Q: Are other partnerships and services at Next Gen going out to bid?
  - A: The funding that the SWC provides to the Next Gen Zone is what is out for bid. Other partners who bring in staff and funding are welcome to stay at the center, and we hope that they do choose to remain.
- Q: In two RFPs (Page 16 on the WorkSource providers, and page 13 on Next Gen Zone), it mentions co-investing from customers in their own training. In the past when we have attempted to implement co-investment, it becomes a topic of scrutiny from the Department of Labor, that we may be screening applicants out of training unfairly. Is it allowable in the DOL guidelines that we can ask a student to co-invest in their own training? If they cannot afford it, will we have findings that we are screening them out?
  - A: This is a great question. Evidence strongly suggests that if students co-invest in their own education, their completion rates are better. However, we don't want to screen anyone out based upon the inability to pay. We want bidders to think creatively about how to incorporate co-investment without screening anyone out. One idea would be reimbursing students after they complete training for the amount that they contribute. Another idea would be a work-based learning pot that students could contribute to for their own education. We need to be creative with how to make that model work.

## General Questions:

- Q: In technical details, you mention that subcontracting is not allowed. Will consortium members each have a stand-alone contract?
  - A: this question has two parts. 1) We do *not* disallow subcontracting. The intent in the RFP language is to stipulate the subcontracting must be pre-approved by the SWC. 2) We anticipate stand-alone contracts with us.
- Q: In the Budget Specifics section bullets 2 and 3, it states the IFA covers staff training/ supplies. May agency-specific staff training/supplies be included in the budget and purpose narrated in budget narrative?
  - A: Yes – limited. You can include some agency-specific staff training, but the purpose of this funding is to support the WorkSource Campus and Talent Solutions. We will be covering the cost of training for staff to be able to complete the work and be good at their jobs. We don't want to limit agency training, but we also want to ensure that consistent training is available to *all* center staff. It can cause challenges when some staff are trained on specific skills and other members of their functional team are not trained.
- Q: In Performance Metrics, is it accurate that the Adult targets are higher than Dislocated Worker?
  - A: Yes. Our Adult performance for PY17Q2 was the highest in the state, and the state picked that quarter to use as the baseline for setting our targets. These numbers were also based on the previous service delivery model (before ISD). We realize that this may be a difficult performance standard to meet in ISD, but performance targets will be reduced at the end of the year if WIOA-targeted populations are served.
- Q: Are those rates for those who receive individualized training services?
  - A: The Employment Rate is for Basic Services, which means everyone served in the center. Other performance targets are specific to different programs, and don't apply as broadly. Please refer to federal law for additional information, or you may request technical assistance from our office.
- Q: In the loading chart are exits to be calculated for all service levels; if yes, will the SWC be negotiating a lower Employment Rate?
  - A: Washington State and the SWC are prepared to negotiate for appropriate changes to local and state targets; however, the U.S. Department of Labor is using this time to examine the results of co-enrollment before negotiating. The state and the SWC intend to hold harmless the performance ratings that result from shifts in the population enrolled.
- Q: On Risk Assessment form you ask about changes in business systems and staff; do you require a summary?
  - A: We will need a summary prior to finalizing a contract and including this information during the application process will ensure the smoothest process possible. In short, it is not required at time of proposal, but is preferred.
- Q: Will these questions and answers be posted to the website?
  - A: Yes, by Monday afternoon. All other submitted questions are also posted to the website within two business days of being submitted.

- Q: You put the option in for presentations and additional materials. Is that a decision that you will make after receiving proposals?
  - A: Yes