

## ***Community Reinvestment Project – Accelerating Community Connections RFP***

### **About Us**

The Spokane Workforce Council (SWC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to elevate local workforce efforts with critical insights, researched guidance, innovative funding, and strategic partnership – so that we can cultivate a flourishing Spokane, together. We are powered by both private and public funding, giving us the ability to invest in a wide range of innovative projects.

We advise and fund the WorkSource system in Spokane County, which consists of two career centers and 19 affiliated sites across the county. [WorkSource Spokane](#) and [Next Generation Zone](#) provide specialized career and training services to individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, are working multiple jobs to make ends meet, and many other employment situations. Our services include training for in-demand occupations, career coaching, workshops such as résumé building and interview preparation, supportive services needed for job search such as transportation and work clothing, and much more. We also help connect our customers to stabilization and social services needed to be successful in obtaining and retaining employment such as housing, assistance with state benefits, childcare, healthcare, and more. Practically speaking, we provide leadership and guidance for more than 100 workforce professionals from a variety of agencies, all working together toward the common goal of helping workers find good jobs, and helping businesses find the right talent.

The SWC has a strong commitment to equity and we are committed to working within our spheres of influence to close wage, employment, and education equity gaps. We know that our system has not always been accessible to all in our community, and are committed to being a catalyst of positive change. This project is an opportunity for the SWC to learn more about where our service gaps are in the Spokane region and to listening what communities of color need from the workforce system. You can read more about our board and organization’s equity journey [here](#).

We are an [equal opportunity](#) employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington relay 711.

### **Project Description**

The Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) is a [community-designed plan](#) to invest \$200 million from the [Community Reinvestment Account](#) into communities across Washington State that were disproportionately harmed by the historical design and enforcement of criminal laws and penalties for drug possession (otherwise known as the “war on drugs”).

The SWC, as one of the 12 local workforce boards in Washington State, is one of the many partners on this project, providing Career Accelerator Incentives to individuals enrolled in our Economic Security for All (EcSA) poverty reduction workforce program. Career Accelerator Incentives are \$1,000 monthly payments made to individuals who are actively working on their individualized

career plans with the goal of reaching self-sufficiency. An essential element of economic development for these populations is workforce development, specifically helping to connect people with careers in in-demand industries with family sustaining wages. Read more about this part of the CRP here: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/program-index/community-reinvestment-project/crp-economic-development/>. The two-pronged goal of this program is to help mitigate the negative effects of the “war on drugs” on Black, tribal, and Latine individuals and families in our region, specifically by helping move those experiencing or at risk of poverty to self-sufficiency.

We are seeking proposals from organizations that provide services to one or more of these groups (Black, tribal, or Latine) to increase access of these focus populations to workforce system resources, specifically the EcSA program and Career Accelerator Incentives. Additionally, our goal is to foster stronger relationships, include voice of the customer in program design, provide more culturally specific services, and increase cultural competence in line with our equity [mission](#).

### **Eligibility Criteria for Applicants**

Applicant organizations must:

1. Provide services in Spokane County (there is not a requirement to be headquartered in Spokane County, as long as services are provided in Spokane County).
2. Either:
  - a. Be registered as a By-and-For organization with the Washington State Department of Commerce **or**
  - b. Be a federally recognized tribe in Washington **or**
  - c. Have the ability to become registered as a By-and-For organization by July 1, 2024. More information is available here: <https://bit.ly/crpwareg>

As defined by the [Office of Equity](#), to qualify as “By-and-For” for the CRP, an organization must:

- Be a part of, rooted in, and defined by the identity of the Black, Latine, and/or tribal community.
- Have leadership and staff who belong to the Black, Latine, and/or tribal community.
- Build trust, advocate, respond, and solve problems specific to Black, Latine, and/or tribal community.
- Have roots in their communities as change agents and providers of community services (services can include, but are not limited to, social services, employment support, community programming, educational support, etc.).
- Invest in and work with community members to improve their quality of life.
- Faith-based organizations are eligible.

The SWC is committed to supporting local solutions for our community. We are available to assist organizations in their application to be included as a By-and-For organization as part of this application process. Please contact us at [ProgramTeam@spokaneworkforce.org](mailto:ProgramTeam@spokaneworkforce.org) to inquire about assistance with the By-and-For application process.

### **Scope of Work**

The SWC plans to make 3-5 awards of up to \$30,000 each to By-and-For organizations that work with one or more of the CRP focus populations to perform the following work.

- Primary focus: provide customer referrals to the WorkSource Spokane Campus, specifically the EcSA CRP program.
  - Customer referrals must primarily be individuals or families from the CRP target populations (Black, tribal, Latine) who are eligible for the EcSA program.
    - EcSA eligibility criteria:
      - Be legally entitled to work in the United States, **and**
      - Be experiencing poverty *or* be below the self-sufficiency standard as determined by the [UW Self Sufficiency Calculator](#)<sup>1</sup> **and**
      - Have demonstrated needs or goals related to education, training, and/or employment<sup>2</sup>
    - Proposed targets should be at least one (1) referral for every \$1,000 - \$1,500 of requested funds. We will consider proposals that have targets outside of the range given, if rationale is provided in the proposal. We are committed to considering creative program design ideas. Final targets can be established during contract negotiations with selected bidder(s).
- Participate on our Economic Security for All (EcSA) Advisory Committee, which meets at least quarterly.
- Attend WorkSource Campus Meetings one or more times during the contract period to present on your organization, services provided and about appropriate referral pipelines.
- Attend the 2025 WorkSource System Conference, typically held in June of each year.
- Submit regular narrative and budget reports utilizing templates provided by the SWC.

### **Allowable Costs**

- Funding can be used broadly and creatively for this project, including covering personnel costs, occupancy costs, outreach activities, travel and training, supplies, and more.
- Direct client costs such as support services to remove barriers (for example, gas vouchers or bus passes) are also allowable.
- Contracts will be cost reimbursement contracts, so organizations must have the ability to incur costs and submit monthly invoices for reimbursement.
- No funds available under this RFP shall be used for investment in revolving loan funds, capitalization of business, investment in contract bidding resource centers or similar activities, or foreign travel.
- We will work with selected grantees on how funds are paid out, either in advance payments or cost reimbursement. Payment details will be negotiated as a part of the contracting process. We are committed to preventing undo financial hardship to grantees as a part of this process.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants may be employed at time of enrollment. If wages are not sufficient to meet household needs and/or the participant considers themselves to be under-employed, they may still receive services from this program.

<sup>2</sup> WorkSource career coaches work one-on-one with clients to refine and develop career plans and goals, and we do not require that referred customers have fully developed career plans at time of referral. However, the EcSA/CRP program is primarily a workforce development program, and referred clients must have a desire to pursue employment as a means to achieving self-sufficiency.

We reserve the right to make smaller or larger awards, more or fewer awards, or no awards at all, at our discretion, depending upon number and quality of applications received.

### **Application Process**

To apply, please click on this [Jot Form link](#). Below are the questions that will be asked on the JotForm. We recommend writing your responses in a Word document, monitoring the indicated word limit, and pasting your responses into the application.

- What is your organization's mission statement?
- Describe your organization and experience in providing services to one or more targeted populations. (500 words)
- What is the racial/ethnic demographic of your customers? Give as much detail as possible (numbers, percentages, ideally over the last 2-3 years). (300 words)
- Describe any relevant experience with workforce development, the local public workforce system, or other relevant systems. (300 words)
- Approximately how many customers per year do you believe would be interested in WorkSource services, including but not limited to the EcSA program?
- How many referrals of eligible participants do you commit to making over the 12-month contract period?
- Please describe how you envision the referral process between your staff, customers, and the WorkSource system working. (300 words)
- Please describe your plan to conduct any necessary outreach in order to attract relevant populations to this program. (300 words)
- Do you currently have the staffing capabilities that would allow for outside meetings with WorkSource staff, the SWC, and other organizations on a consistent basis? (Yes/No)
- Please describe your plan to ensure staff are able to participate on the EcSA Advisory Committee, relevant WorkSource meetings, and referral design projects. (300 words)
- Does your organization work one-on-one with customers? (Yes/No)
- Please share what your goals for your customers are, and how your organization views and measures progress and success. (300 words)
- Does your organization currently have and use a case management system or software? (Yes/No)
- Please share how you envision the process of co-case management working to ensure the needs of each participant are met through co-enrollment with your organization and the workforce system. (300 words)
- Address the following Racial Equity and Equal Opportunity questions:
  - Is your organization classified as a Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MWBE)?
  - Please describe your organization's policies related to racial equity. Feel free to link to a page on your website that contains any pertinent information.
  - Please describe your organization's commitment to ensuring equal opportunity for its workforce and customers. Feel free to link to a page on your website that contains any pertinent information.
- What else should we know about your organization or application? (300 words)
- Budget Narrative – please describe your proposed costs and provide any additional or supplemental information not included in the budget template (300 words)

- Can you provide proof of an insurance certificate? This will be a required part of the contract for all funded organizations. (Yes/No)
- Is your organization/entity presently debarred or suspended? (Yes/No)
- Has your organization been defunded or had a reduction in grant, loan, or other type of financial assistance in the past 12 months? (Yes/No)
- You will also be asked to upload a completed budget document, a current valid business license, your 501(c)3 verification letter (if applicable), and your organization's W-9.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Applications will be evaluated in a multi-stage process, which includes both a standardized set of scoring criteria and a comparative evaluation of bidders' fit with the objectives of this initiative to ensure representation from all focus populations. Scoring criteria can be downloaded on our website [www.spokaneworkforce.org/ACC](http://www.spokaneworkforce.org/ACC) and is summarized below. In-person or online interviews may be conducted as a part of the review process.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate responses and ultimately award funding, and scoring will be based upon the ability to earn a total of 65 points:

1. Organization meets required eligibility criteria (registered tribal entity or registered By-and-For organization; not debarred or suspended) – ineligible applications will not be scored.
2. Service Strategy (15 points): Proposed service strategy aligns with the goals and deliverables of the RFP, including outreach, referral, and performance goals. Organization has demonstrated their capacity and ability to meet contract deliverables within the project timeline.
3. Focus Populations (10 points): Organization has demonstrated a satisfactory record of relevant experience providing services to one or more targeted populations who are eligible for and in need of EcSA services.
4. Referral Targets (10 points): Organization has proposed a workable referral design process and has proposed appropriate targets (one referral per \$1,000 - \$1,500 of funding requested, or justification for targets if outside of that scope).
5. Case Management (5 points): Organization has outlined their capacity to co-case manage or support referred customers and has factored their own services into their proposal.
6. Workforce System Participation (5 points): Organization has affirmed their willingness and capacity to participate in SWC Advisory Groups and conversations about workforce system services to their customers.
7. Equity (5 points): Organization demonstrates commitment to ensuring equity and equal opportunity for its workforce and customers.
8. Budget (10 points): Budget submission clearly outlines what funding will be utilized for and is within scope and allowability for the project. Application materials reflect a record of integrity, business ethics, and fiscal accountability.
9. Completeness of Application (5 points): Submission of all required documentation and information.

### **Timeline**

RFP issued:	May 20, 2024
Optional Bidders' Q&A Sessions (Zoom)	May 23, 2024, 2-3 PM June 3, 2024, 11:30AM – 12:30PM
Proposals due:	June 7, 2024
Review Period:	Jun 10 – 19, 2024
Award Notification:	June 20, 2024
Anticipated Contract Dates:	July 1, 2024 – Jun 30, 2025

**Application Process**

All documents must be submitted electronically through the form on our website <https://forms.spokaneworkforce.org/241336586110956> by close of business on June 7, 2024. Firms that have been debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from federal procurement will not be considered.

Bidders may contact SWC staff by email with questions, which are considered public information and will be posted in their entirety on the SWC website with answers within two (2) business days. Bidders may also request a phone call by emailing [ProgramTeam@spokaneworkforce.org](mailto:ProgramTeam@spokaneworkforce.org), and we will provide a call back within two business days. Questions will be accepted until June 6, 2024. Questions submitted using alternative formats or after the deadline may not be answered. All questions should be submitted to [ProgramTeam@spokaneworkforce.org](mailto:ProgramTeam@spokaneworkforce.org).

We will offer two (2) optional Q&A Sessions as a part of this process. The dates and times are listed in the Timeline section above, and Zoom links will be provided on our website.

The Spokane Workforce Council is an [equal opportunity](#) employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Washington relay 711.