

Economic Growth Region 2 Request for Proposals

For

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Youth
Programs and Services**

Services to be Delivered

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

**RFP Issue Date: April 28, 2009
Proposal Due Date: May 26, 2009**

***Serving the following Northern Indiana counties: Elkhart, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall,
and St. Joseph***

Partners for Workforce Solutions
300 East Main Street, Suite 100
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802
260-459-1400

Section I: Background and General RFP Information

A. Overview of RFP

The Northern Indiana Regional Workforce Board (RWB) and Partners for Workforce Solutions – the Regional Operator (RO) for Economic Growth Region 2 (EGR-2) - are issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to procure service providers to deliver WIA Title I Youth services to eligible youth in Northern Indiana. More specifically, this RFP is seeking proposals from organizations and agencies to use WIA Youth funds to provide youth development and workforce preparation services to young individuals who meet federal income eligibility criteria.

In keeping with the intent of WIA, the RWB and RO are committed to helping economically disadvantaged youth achieve success in school, access job training and higher education opportunities, and gain the knowledge and skills required to progress in well-paying careers. The RWB and RO are seeking partnerships with organizations that can demonstrate measurable, positive impact on youth. Youth-serving organizations are invited to respond to this Request for Proposal (RFP) as an important step toward building a network of integrated youth services, one that helps youth succeed in school, at work, and as members and leaders of their communities.

The RWB and RO are seeking interested organizations that demonstrate the four critical characteristics listed below.

- Competent and cooperative management with a vision for developing and supporting true youth development activities;
- A commitment and ability to ensure that youth oriented staff are available to serve an increased number of low income youth over the next year;
- A high level of innovation and creativity in designing project and experiential based learning activities in which young individuals can participate; and,
- A willingness to work with community partners and educational organizations in the planning and implementation of these innovative approaches to youth development.

B. Purpose of RFP

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals for the delivery of youth services under the Workforce Investment Act in the following counties: Elkhart, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, and St. Joseph counties. Interested organizations can propose programs and services for youth in all five counties or they can propose to target specific counties as appropriate. However, the RO will ensure that WIA Youth services are available to eligible youth in each of these counties.

WIA rules require that programs must be designed to serve both low income in-school and out-of-school youth. In this solicitation, **the RO is accepting proposals that target and serve one or more of the three following categories of youth**

1. Youth who are 16 years of age or older, are in school, but are at-risk of not successfully finishing high school;
2. Youth who are 16 years of age or older and have dropped out of school (and have not yet earned a GED); and,
3. Youth who are out of school having successfully completed high school, desire to participate in further learning activities, but lack the financial resources or guidance necessary to make this happen.

WIA program requirements mandate that a minimum of 30% of all WIA Youth program expenditures must be spent on providing services to out-of-school youth (categories 2 and 3 above). Bidding organizations should keep this requirement in mind to ensure that the proposed program design plans for services to both in-school and out-of-school youth.

C. WIA Youth Program Description

The overall goal of the WIA Youth program is to connect eligible youth to skill development and other educational activities and then to the local labor market. To accomplish this, youth development strategies must be developed to help interested youth enroll in and successfully complete critical skill development activities AND successfully transition to employment in the local labor market. Youth who are deficient in basic skills must also participate in activities designed to improve their reading, writing, math, analytical, computer and communication skills.

From a broad perspective, the WIA youth program design must consist of four components: 1) an objective assessment of the skill levels and service needs of youth customers, 2) the development of an individual service strategy or plan for each youth customer, 3) the delivery of specific youth development and other workforce services to youth customers, and 4) all youth must receive some form of follow-up services for a minimum period of 12 months following their completion of all program activities. From a more detailed perspective, the WIA legislation mandates that ten specific program elements must be included in the WIA Youth program design (these can be available by direct service provision, through partnerships with other organizations, or by referral to other organizations as appropriate):

- Tutoring and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention activities
- Alternative secondary school offerings
- Summer employment opportunities, directly linked to academic and occupational learning activities
- Paid or unpaid work experiences, including internships
- Occupational skill training
- Leadership development opportunities
- Supportive services
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Adult Mentoring
- Follow up services for a minimum of 12 months

Interested organizations should also note that the RO views strong community partnerships as instrumental to the success and sustainability of “second chance” programs for at-risk and out-of-school youth. Proposals should therefore demonstrate comprehensive collaboration - including shared financing as appropriate – among local school districts, community colleges, and community-based organizations.

D. Alignment of WIA Youth Program with High-Growth Industries

The RWB and the RO are committed to better aligning youth programs and activities with the demand occupations and industries in Region 2. This will ensure that youth are developing the skill sets required by employers and that they are being prepared for jobs projected to be in-demand in the region. Over the past several years, there have been significant efforts to identify target industries and specific occupations that will be the focus of these alignment efforts. These regional efforts have identified a number of high-growth occupations that are to be targeted:

⇒ **Manufacturing, Industrial, and Commercial Occupations**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| CAD Drafters and Designers | Welders |
| CNC Mill and Machine Operators | Computer Repair and Installation |
| Die Setters | Electronic Technicians |
| Heating and Air Technicians | Industrial Maintenance and Repair |
| Machine Operators | Over the Road/Local Route Truck Drivers |
| Quality Assurance Technicians | Tool and Die Makers/Mold Makers |

⇒ **Health Care Occupations**

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Dental Hygienists and Technicians | Emergency Medical Technicians |
| Medical Assistant | Medical Lab Technicians |
| Pharmacy Technicians | Phlebotomists |
| Radiology Technicians | Registered Nurses |
| Respiratory Therapists | Physical Therapists |

⇒ **Business and Other Occupations**

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Accountants and Auditors | Computer Programmers/Analysts |
| Computer Support Specialists | Culinary/Food Preparation Services |
| Data/Systems Managers | Early Childhood Development Specialists |
| Graphic Designers | Human Resource Specialists |
| Law Enforcement/Safety/Security | Network Administrators |
| Paralegal/Legal Assistants | Teachers/Teachers Aides |
| Web Designers | |

The RWB and RO are seeking WIA Youth proposals from organizations that understand the relationship between workforce and economic development and that can assist in aligning WIA Youth programs and services with these targeted occupations.

E. Transition of Current (Carry-In) WIA Youth Customers

The RWB and RO are committed to a smooth continuation of services to existing youth customers without an undue interruption of services. Youth customers currently receiving services from an existing provider will continue to receive services from that provider if the provider is awarded a new contract through this RFP. Youth customers currently receiving services from an existing provider that does not receive a contract extension or new contract under this RFP will be smoothly transitioned to another provider. The RWB and RO may require new contractors to accept “carry-in” WIA youth participants and to continue providing appropriate WIA services to these young individuals.

F. Performance Goals & Measures

The Workforce Investment Act measures the success of WIA Youth programs services based on a set of required performance measures. These performance measures have recently undergone a significant change and now include three Department of Labor (DOL) defined measures for youth served in the program:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| ▪ Placement in Employment or Education | 66% of all youth |
| ▪ Attainment of Degree or Certificate | 50% of all youth |
| ▪ Literacy and Numeracy Gains | 75% of all youth |

Please note that these performance measures are negotiated on an annual basis and are therefore subject to change based on these negotiations with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and DOL. For more specific information on these measures, interested organizations are encouraged to review Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 17-05 as issued by the US Department of Labor on February 17, 2006. This Guidance Letter provides significant detail on how these performance measures are calculated.

G. Eligible Bidders

Organizations eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP include not-for-profit organizations, education institutions, government entities, for-profit businesses and other organizations that are not suspended, debarred or otherwise prohibited from entering into a legal contract for WIA Youth funding. Proposals from community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, small businesses and minority-owned businesses are encouraged.

All bidders must accept liability for all aspects of any WIA program conducted under contract with the RO. Bidders will be liable for any disallowed costs or illegal expenditures of funds or program operations conducted.

This Request for Proposals is not in itself an offer of work nor does it commit the RO to fund any proposals submitted. The RO is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation or research of proposals. The RO reserves the right to make an award to any bidder or to make no awards, if that is deemed to serve the best interests of Northern Indiana. The RO also reserves the right

to: 1) amend or withdraw this RFP at any time, 2) reject any and all proposals and 3) reissue this RFP if needed. All commitments made by the RO are contingent upon the availability of funds.

H. Contract Length and Details

Based on last year's allocation, the RO believes that it will have approximately \$628,000 in WIA Youth resources that it can award to organizations to support staffing the WIA youth program and the delivery of effective youth development and workforce preparation services. In addition, the RO will maintain at its level approximately \$786,000 which will be used to pay for youth training activities as well as other direct expenses (e.g. the RO will directly pay vendors for such items as tutoring expenses, tuition expenses, support services, and other similar expenses).

Bidding organizations should know that the RO intends to be as inclusive as possible in this solicitation. The goal is to receive a wide variety of high quality, innovative proposals that meet the youth development needs of the emerging workforce in EGR-2. The resulting contract with the successful bidder will be for a one-year period which can begin any time after contract negotiations are completed. Based on performance, the RO may elect to renew the contract for up to two additional years.

I. RFP Provisions and Expectations

Bidding organizations must assure that they will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. The RO also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements that the RO makes to carry out the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity. This WIA Title I funded program is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services will be made available upon request for individuals with disabilities. By submitting a bid all bidders are providing an assurance that they will comply with the above nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

The successful bidder also assures that if awarded a contract by the RO, it will comply with Regional, State and Federal program and financial monitoring requirements. This means that the bidder will make available required information (both program and financial) as is required to satisfy local, state, and federal monitoring expectations. In addition, bidders are required to maintain all WIA records for three years.

Bidding organizations should note that specifications in this RFP may change based on issuance of State or Federal policy or WIA re-authorization. The RO will work with successful bidders to implement any changes required by the State or the federal Department of Labor. By submitting a proposal, the bidder agrees to work cooperatively with the RO to comply with any required subsequent changes.

J. Proposal Submission and Time Line

To ensure a fair and open process for all interested bidders, the following time table will be used with this RFP:

RFP Issued	April 28, 2009
Questions & Answers Deadline	May 19, 2009
Proposals Due	May 26, 2009
Proposal Review Completed	May 29, 2009
Regional Workforce Board Approval	June 5, 2009
Contract Negotiations Completed	June 12, 2009
Contractor Begins Delivering Services	July 1, 2009

The RO may require selected bidders to attend oral interviews, participate in negotiations and rewrite their statements of work as agreed upon during the negotiations.

Section II: Proposal Requirements for Youth Proposals

- A. Proposals must be received by noon EST, May 26 2009 in person or by mail at the address indicated. Proposals received after that time and date may be rejected. Please note that proposals must be received not postmarked by noon, May 26, 2009. Proposals will not be accepted by email or fax.
- B. Proposals must include:
- Attachments completed with requested information and executed properly
 - One copy of the proposal with original signatures clearly labeled "ORIGINAL."
 - Five copies of the proposal clearly labeled "COPY."
 - An electronic copy of the proposal must also be submitted via email and sent to the attention of Beth Suman, CFO and COO at BSuman@partnersforworkforce.org.
 - All pages must be numbered
 - Proposal is limited to 20 single-sided pages, not including other sections of your proposal such as required attachments, your audit/financial reports, and other attachments such as resumes and organizational charts
 - Proposals that fail to follow instructions and do not include all applicable information and forms may not be considered.
- C. **Attachment A** (Budget Form) must be completed and a one page budget narrative must be used to support the line item budgets being proposed.
- D. **Attachment B** (Production Schedule) must be completed.
- E. **Attachment C** (Non-Collusion Affidavit) must be signed and submitted.
- F. **Attachment D** (Assurances and Certifications) must be signed and submitted.
- G. Proposals may be hand delivered or mailed to the following address:
- Beth Suman, Regional Operator
Partners for Workforce Solutions
300 East Main Street
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802
- H. Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted in writing to Beth Suman, CFO and COO, via email to BSuman@partnersforworkforce.org or fax at 260-436-5973. Questions will be addressed until May 19, 2009.
- I. Use this as a checklist to ensure that you have included all items required to respond to this RFP. Failure to include all required information could result in rejection of your proposal.
- Cover Letter with original signatures
 - Proposal Statement of Work
 - Attachment A (Budget Plan)

- ❑ Budget Narrative (one page)
- ❑ Organizational Chart
- ❑ Attachment B (Production Schedule)
- ❑ Attachment C (Non-Collusion Affidavit)
- ❑ Attachment D (Assurances and Certifications)
- ❑ Copy of most recent audit report

- J.** Bidders have the right to appeal any action or decision related to this RFP. Appeals must be submitted to the Northern Indiana Workforce Board, Inc and will be reviewed and investigated by the Board. The decision of the Workforce Board in such situations shall be final. Bidders wishing to make a formal appeal should do so in writing to Paul Marsh, Northern Indiana Workforce Board Chair, 300 East Main Street, Suite 100, Fort Wayne, IN 46802.
- K.** Unless specifically requested by the RO, changes and/or amendments to the originally submitted proposal will not be considered. In addition, the RO reserves the right to: (1) amend or withdraw this RFP at any time, (2) reject any and all proposals, and (3) re-issue this RFP if necessary.

Section III: Proposal Statement of Work

Interested organizations should adhere to the following outline in responding to this RFP. This will make your proposal more reviewable and will allow reviewers of your proposal to make more informed decisions.

A. Experience of Bidding Organization and Staff (15% of overall rating)

1. Provide an overall description of your organization. What is your organization's mission and vision, governance structure, and legal status? Please describe your management structure that highlights key management personnel and their proposed roles with this project. Please identify the single point of contact for your organization. What experience does your single point of contact have at directing and managing youth projects? **(6% of overall rating)**
2. Proposals must include information to demonstrate that the organization and/or its key staff has a record of success in operating youth development and workforce preparation programs or projects. Describe your organizational and key staff experience in providing these services to youth. Outline any specific workforce services that your organization and/or key staff have provided to low income youth that are either at-risk of not graduating high school or are out-of-school but looking for further opportunities or guidance. **(5% of overall rating)**
3. Provide three references of individuals outside your organization familiar with the quality of prior youth development and workforce preparation programs your organization and/or key staff is capable of providing. Letters of support are not required and will not be considered in the overall evaluation of bidding organizations. **(2% of overall rating)**
4. Describe your organization's experience in working with customer tracking and/or MIS systems. Specifically, detail any experience your organization and key staff possess in the real time reporting of customer activities in an MIS data base. **(2% of overall rating)**

B. Proposed Plan of Work (40% of overall rating)

1. In section I.B. of this RFP, the RWB and RO have identified three specific groups of youth to be targeted for WIA Youth assistance. Of these three groups, detail which of these specific youth your organization will target for services. Also, identify the specific number of youth (for each of the three targeted groups your organization is proposing to serve) that will receive WIA Youth services through your organization. **(2% of overall rating)**
2. The RO is looking for highly innovative and nontraditional recruitment strategies that aggressively and effectively outreach to at-risk youth. Describe the specific strategies that your organization will utilize to make youth aware of available WIA Youth services

and to recruit them for participation in youth development and workforce preparation activities. **(7% of overall rating)**

3. Describe the eligibility, assessment, individual service strategy development, and case management services that will be provided to youth. Indicate how youth will be assessed and prepared for youth development and workforce preparation activities. Describe any innovative or unique approaches to youth assessment or youth service planning that your organization will utilize. **(7% of overall rating)**
4. Describe all WIA Youth services that will be provided by your organization. Please provide specific details on how each of the ten required WIA Youth services will be delivered to youth that need these services (the ten required services are identified in section I.C. of this RFP). The RWB and RO are especially interested in the youth development services that your organization will make available to WIA Youth customers. Please provide information on all youth programs, projects and learning/development activities to be provided by your organization. **(7% of overall rating)**
5. Because the recently signed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the stimulus package) contained an expectation for a strong summer youth employment program, please detail your specific strategies for developing and implementing a summer employment program for young individuals. Detail the kinds of summer work and activities in which youth will be engaged and identify the process that will be used to payroll these youth and issue checks/payments to them. **(7% of overall rating)**
6. Detail how your proposed WIA Youth services align with the regional labor market. Provide specific details on how your proposed WIA Youth services align with the skill requirements of the high growth occupations as identified in section I.D. of this RFP. **(5% of overall rating)**
7. Describe how your organization will manage WIA Youth services and activities to meet or exceed each of the performance measures that are in place for the WIA Youth program. Provide specific information on the strategies your organization will use to ensure that youth are continuously engaged in WIA Youth services until they have successfully transitioned to employment or more advanced training. In addition, please provide an assurance that services will also be designed to meet any additional quality standards that may be established by the RWB or RO. **(5% of overall rating)**

C. Staffing Plan and Organizational Structure (15% of overall rating)

Staffing of the WIA youth program is one of the most critical aspects of ensuring program quality. Please describe your proposed staffing plans.

1. While staffing/hiring decisions will be the responsibility of your organization, please identify the qualifications of any current staff that will be involved in delivering the proposed WIA Youth services. Include brief position descriptions with position titles.

Your staffing plan should also specify staffing levels and locations where these staff will be located. Include an organizational chart that illustrates the structure of the staff to be used in support of the proposed programs. **(5% of overall rating)**

2. If the staff is to be hired at a later date, include the minimum qualifications required for selection of staff. Also, please describe the process through which qualified staff will be identified and selected. **(5% of overall rating)**
3. Identify key management staff by name with a summary of their credentials and a brief resume of their qualifications. **(5% of overall rating)**

D. Partnerships and Coordination (5% of overall rating)

Include a brief description of any partners that will be involved in the operation of your proposed WIA youth program. Describe the specific role that these partners will play in delivering the proposed workforce services to youth. For partners that will play a significant role in your proposed Youth program, you are encouraged to include letters from these partners which reference the specific commitments being made, including services to be delivered to youth customers, financial or in-kind contributions if any, and any other commitment(s) being made. **(5% of overall rating)**

E. Financial Management and Budget (25% of overall rating)

The bidder should complete a budget plan as instructed in Attachment A. Please do not deviate from the budget plan provided. Consistency will allow the reviewers to compare the proposed budgets.

1. Bidders must maintain a financial management system that is auditable and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. Financial records must be available for audit and monitoring purposes. Bidders should provide a brief description of the accountability of the organization in this section and provide one copy of their most recent audit report with the bid package. **(7% of overall rating)**
2. Has your organization had any questioned costs, disallowed costs or compliance monitoring findings in the last three years? If so, describe how the issues have been resolved. **(5% of overall rating)**
3. If WIA costs you incurred in the operation of the proposed youth program were subsequently disallowed as a result of an audit or monitoring (meaning you spent them inappropriately), does your organization have the capability to repay these funds? If yes, from what source? **(3% of overall rating)**
4. A one-page budget narrative should be attached that describes the allocation of funds amongst programs and the philosophy of the bidder with respect to minimizing overhead costs while maximizing client costs. The budget narrative should be used to clarify and annotate the budget. **(10% of overall rating)**

Attachment A

Budget Plan

A budget plan must be completed for each category of youth you are proposing to serve (Younger Youth and Older Youth). If proposing to serve both categories of youth, a total of two budget plans will be required. Include in your budget plan all proposed management fees, including all costs associated with staff that are not providing direct customer services.

Instructions for completing a Budget Plan are located in the first tab of the Budget Plan Excel file. Questions regarding this Budget plan may be submitted in writing to Beth Suman, CFO and COO, via email to BSuman@partnersforworkforce.org or fax at 260-436-5973. Budget questions will be addressed until May 19, 2009.

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WIA Youth Production Schedule Appendix 1 Enter Organization Name

Planned Youth Enrollments & Exits By Quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Total for Year
Planned WIA Youth Enrollments (# of youth to begin receiving services)					
Planned WIA Youth Exits (# of youth to stop receiving services)					

Performance Goals for Proposed Youth Program

Performance Measures/Outcomes	Number of Youth to Attain Outcome	Required Goal as a %	Organizational Goal as a %
Placement in Education or Employment		66%	
Attainment of Degree/Certificate		50%	
Literacy/Numeracy Gain		75%	

These performance measures/outcomes have been described in section I.F. of this RFP and are subject to change based on state negotiations. Bidders should enter both an estimated total number of youth that it believes will attain these outcomes as well as a percentage of the total number of youth being served.

Non-Collusion Affidavit

State of Indiana

County of _____

The respondent is hereby giving oath that it has not, in any way, directly or indirectly, entered into any arrangement or agreement with any other respondent or with any officer or employee of the Economic Growth Region 2 Regional Workforce Board and Regional Operator whereby it has paid or will pay to such other respondent or officer or employee any sum of money or anything of real value whatever; and has not, directly or indirectly, entered into any arrangement or agreement with any other respondent or respondents which tends to or does lessen or destroy free competition in the letting of the agreement sought for by the attached response; that no inducement of any form or character other than that which appears on the face of the response will be suggested, offered, paid, or delivered to any person whomsoever to influence the acceptance of the said response or awarding of the agreement, nor has this respondent any agreement or understanding of any kind whatsoever, with any person whomsoever, to pay, deliver to, or share with any other person in any way or manner any of the proceeds of the agreement sought by this response.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Print or Type Name

Date

Assurances and Certifications

The respondent assures and certifies to each of the following items:

1. The bidding organization agrees to comply with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations governing the Workforce Investment Act, Regional Workforce Board & Regional Operator and any other applicable laws and regulations.
2. The bidding organization has not been debarred or suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federally funded programs.
3. The bidding organization possesses legal authority to offer the attached proposal.
4. A drug free workplace will be maintained in accordance with State of Indiana requirements.
5. By submitting a proposal the bidder certifies to his/her knowledge and belief that there is no conflict of interest (real or apparent) inherent in the bid or in delivering the plan of work if the RO awards a contract. A conflict of interest would arise if any individual involved in the preparation of this RFP, proposal review and rating or award decisions has a financial or other interest in or represents the bidding organization and would be likely to gain financially or personally from the award of a contract. The same would hold true for any member of the individual's family, partner, or an organization employing or about to employ any of the above as a direct result of the successful award of a contract under the RFP. The RO reserves the right to disqualify a bid should a conflict of interest be discovered during the solicitation process.
6. The bidding organization assures that if awarded a contract by the RO, it will comply with Regional, State and Federal program and financial monitoring requirements. This means the bidder will make available required information (both program and financial) as is required to satisfy local, state, and federal monitoring expectations.
7. The bidding organization assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. The RO also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements that the RO makes to carry out the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity. This WIA Title I funded program is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services will be made available upon request for individuals with disabilities. By submitting a bid all bidders are providing an assurance that they will comply with the above nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Print or Type Name

Date