



**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SOLUTIONS
MACON & DEWITT COUNTIES**

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA #19

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
for
WIOA Youth Services**

Funding for the Youth Services will be provided under Title 1B of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

FUNDING PERIOD: Program Year 2021 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)

PROPOSALS DUE: Friday, April 9, 2021 by 4:00pm

Late proposals will not be considered for a grant award. Proposals must be submitted electronically by 4:00pm by the due date listed. The County reserves the right to determine the timeliness of all proposal submissions.



A. Purpose of Request for Proposal

The Chief Elected Officials and the LWIA #19 Workforce Investment Board of Macon and DeWitt Counties have authorized Workforce Investment Solutions (WIS) to release a Request for Proposal to qualified and interested applicants that have experience and the capability to operate Youth Programs under the provisions of Title I of the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The purpose of this solicitation is to identify and fund organizations that will design and implement innovative programming and comprehensive training and education services that result in youth participants achieving academic and employment success.

WIOA youth programming is designed to assist in-school and out of school youth address barriers to employment, prepare youth for post-secondary and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skill training credentials, and secure employment.

Many jobs requiring skilled training go unfilled due to employers not being able to find the talent they need. The overall goal of the youth program is to address the job specific skills gaps of youth in the Macon and/or DeWitt Counties. Workforce Investment Solutions is committed to implementing programs which produce a work ready candidate for local employers.

Providers must place an emphasis on work experience and credential/skill attainment that will improve the employment success of youth enrolled in the program. Work experience and skills training must focus on the demands of local employers, especially in high-growth industries and occupations identified in the regional workforce plan. Those sectors include, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Professional and Business Services, Transportation/Warehousing, Construction, Leisure and Hospitality and Information Technology. The regional plan can be found at: [ED1-Regional-Plan-Revised-8.2020.pdf \(worknetdeatur.org\)](https://www.worknetdeatur.org/ED1-Regional-Plan-Revised-8.2020.pdf).

B. Background and Governance

On July 22, 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law. Programs funded under this RFP must be prepared to comply with WIOA regulations. (The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Act) 2014, HR 803 – <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>)

C. General Information

Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act authorizes services for youth, ages 14-24. (In-School ages 14-21, Out-of-School ages 16-24.) The Act requires a comprehensive program of services for youth on a year-round basis, which may include summer employment activities. WIS is seeking to fund those who 1) provide services for out-of-school young adults and/or in-school youth who are disconnected from school or work, and 2) can provide a comprehensive and integrated set of training and educational support that increases the number of young adults who will productively engage in the workforce.

Program Requirements

Section 129 (c) (1) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, states that funds allocated to youth service providers shall be used for the following program design:

1. Provide an objective assessment of the academic level, skill levels and service needs of each participant. Assessment shall include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interest, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and development needs of participants.

2. Develop individual service strategies for each participant that shall identify career pathways that include education and employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services for the participant using the assessment as a guideline.
3. Provide:
 - a) Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or recognized postsecondary credential;
 - b) Preparation of postsecondary educational and training opportunities;
 - c) Strong linkages between academic learning and occupational learning;
 - d) Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities; and
 - e) Effective connections to employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.
 - f) Work-based learning opportunities.

Attached to this RFP is a list of fourteen (14) required program elements that programs must, at a minimum, provide to youth per Section 129 (c) (2) of the Act (Attachment D). If a provider does not directly provide the services listed, it must demonstrate the ability to make seamless referrals to appropriate providers of such service. The grantee will have primary responsibility for ensuring that each participant receives the full continuum of services.

Time Frame

- April 9, 2021 Proposals due to Workforce Investment Solutions by 4:00 pm
- April 14, 2021 through April 30, 2021 Committee Review
- May 20, 2021 Proposals taken to Local Workforce Innovation Board for approval
 - Applicants Notified of funding decisions/Budget Revisions Due if needed
- July 1, 2021 – Programs begin

All meeting dates and times are tentative and subject to change.

Participant Eligibility

Funds awarded through this RFP will be used for WIOA eligible youth seeking workforce services. Individuals eligible for services must meet the following criteria:

- A. Meet the general WIOA eligibility criteria (in-school and out-of-school youth):
 - a. Authorized to work in the United States; and
 - b. Registered for the Selective Service, if applicable.

- B. **In-School Youth**: An in-school youth shall be eligible to participate in programs if such individual is:
 - 1) Aged 14-21
 - 2) Attending School
 - 3) Low income, and meet one or more of the following
 - a. Basic skills deficient
 - b. English language learner
 - c. An offender
 - d. A homeless individual
 - e. A runaway
 - f. In foster care or aged out of foster care system
 - g. An individual who is pregnant or parenting
 - h. An individual with a disability
 - i. Person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program to secure and hold employment

- C. **Out-of-School Youth**:
 - 1) An out-of-school youth shall be eligible to participate in these programs if such individual is:
 - 2) Not attending any school (as defined under State Law) and
 - 3) Not younger than 16 or older than 24 at time of eligibility determination and one or more of the following:
 - a. A school dropout
 - b. A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter
 - c. A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent **who is a low-income** individual and is basic skills deficient, or an English Language learner;
 - d. An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
 - e. A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under the Social Security Act Section 477 or in out-of-home placement.
 - f. An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
 - g. A youth who is an individual with a disability;
 - h. A **low-income** individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

Scope of Work

WIOA places a strong emphasis on career pathways as defined as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training and other services that:

- a. Aligns with skill needs of industries in the local economy of the area with emphasis in health care, manufacturing, professional business services, transportation and warehousing, construction and hospitality.
- b. Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals.
- c. Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options.
- d. Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context of workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

The intent of the Act is to ***increase the employment, retention and earnings of participants and increase occupational skill attainment by participants***. Applicants may request funding to provide services for in-school youth, out-of-school youth, or both. Programs should take a "holistic approach", ***preparing each individual for employment success, and educational success***, all while addressing potential barriers to achieve such success.

Work-Based Learning

WIOA requires that **not less than 20% of funds** allocated to the local area must be spent on activities supporting paid and unpaid work experience that have an academic and occupational education component. This may include, *summer employment*, and other employment opportunities available throughout the year such as *pre-apprenticeship programs*, *internships*, *job shadowing* and/or *on-the-job* training opportunities.

In-School Youth versus Out-of-School Youth

WIOA requires that **not less than 75% of funds** allocated to the local area must be spent on activities supporting **Out-of-School Youth**. This will be accomplished by coordinating the mix of services and obligations designated to serve both in-school and out-of-school youth. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has applied for an extension of a waiver for the State of Illinois to require 50% of funds allocated to the local area be spent on Out-of-School youth, and 50% on In-School youth for PY2021. An emphasis will be placed on Out-of-School Youth with a small percentage of funds spent on In-School Youth.

Goal of Program

To prepare and connect youth to education/training, and employment within the high growth occupations in the local labor market for Macon and DeWitt counties.

Local Labor Market/High Growth Industries

According to the Illinois Department of Employment and Security, the top six industries/sectors for Macon and DeWitt Counties are: Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Professional and Business Services, Transportation/Warehousing, Construction, Leisure and Hospitality and Information Technology

Performance Measures and Program Outcomes

WIOA requires a comprehensive performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving continuous improvement of Workforce activities funded under Title I. The intent of continuous improvement is to optimize the return on investment of Federal funds in statewide and local workforce activities. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity mandates five youth core indicators of performance for the WIOA youth programs:

- 1) **Attain Degree or Certification (Credential)**: The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized post-secondary credential within one year after exit from the program.
- 2) **Education & Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit**: The percentage of Title I Youth program participants who are in education or training activities or in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- 3) **Education and Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit**: The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
- 4) **Median Earnings**: The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- 5) **Measurable Skills Gain**: The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress towards such a credential or employment. (Increased TABE levels, diploma, successful completion of secondary or post-secondary semester transcript, completion of an OJT, apprenticeship program or similar milestone; successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation.)

General Proposal Conditions

Costs incurred by Proposers

All costs of the proposal preparation shall be borne by the proposer. The County shall not, in any event, be liable for any pre-contractual expenses incurred by proposer in the preparation and/or submission of the proposals. Proposals shall not include any such expenses as part of the proposed budget.

Best Offer

The proposal shall include the proposer's best terms and conditions.

Accuracy and Completeness

The proposal must set forth accurate and complete information as required in this RFP. Unclear, incomplete and/or inaccurate documentation may not be considered for contract award. Falsification of any information will result in disqualification. If the proposer knowingly and willfully submits false performance or other data, the County of Macon reserves the right to reject the proposal. If it is determined that a contract was awarded as a result of false performance or other data submitted in response to this RFP, the County reserves the right to terminate the contract.

Withdrawal of Proposals

Proposals may be withdrawn by written request of the authorized signatory on the proposers' letterhead at any time prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of applications.

General County Reservations

- Workforce Investment Solutions (WIS) reserves the right to withdraw the RFP at any time without prior notice. WIS makes no representation that any contract will be awarded to any offer responding to the RFP.
- If an inadequate number of proposals are received or the proposals received are deemed non-responsive, WIS and the Local Workforce Investment Board reserves the right to reissue the RFP. Under these conditions, the RFP may be reissued to target specific populations of the respective counties.
- Workforce Investment Solutions reserves the right to request additional information or documentation.
- Proposals shall be reviewed and rated by the staff of Workforce Investment Solutions and the Workforce Investment Board as submitted.
- WIS reserves the right to verify all information in the proposal.
- Proposers approved for funding shall be required to negotiate a contract with Workforce Investment Solutions (Macon County) on an offer/counter offer basis. The negotiation process shall be bound by the best terms and conditions originally offered by the proposer in the proposal. The contract offer of WIS/County of Macon may then contain additional terms different from those set forth herein. As a result of the negotiations process the WIS and the County of Macon reserves the right to:
 - a. Fund all or portions of the proposer's proposal and/or require that one proposer collaborate with another for the provision of specific services;
 - b. Elect to contract directly with one of more of the identified collaborators.

Standing of Proposer

- A proposer may not be recommended for funding, regardless of the merits of the proposal submitted, if it has a history of contract non-compliance with the Counties of Macon or DeWitt, or the State of Illinois or any other funding source, poor past or current contract performance or current disputed or disallowed costs.
- Organizations that have been sanctioned because of non-compliance with the Single Audit Act requirements for managing grant funds will not be eligible to receive funding, if awarded, until their sanction is removed.
- Applicant's proposal is for a period of time not to exceed twelve (12) months. If the contractor performs successfully, then the County of Macon reserves the option to extend the contract.

Proprietary Interest of the County

WIS and The County of Macon reserves the right to retain all submitted proposals, and the proposals shall become the property of the County. Any department or agency has the right to use any or all ideas presented in the proposals submitted in response to this RFP without any changes or limitations. Selection or rejection of a proposal does not affect this right.

All proposals will be considered public document, subject to review and inspection by the public at the County's discretion, in accordance with Public Records Act. Proposers must identify all copyrighted material that they claim are exempt from disclosure under the Public Records Act. In the event any exemption is claimed, the proposer shall be requested to state in the proposal that he or she will defend any and all actions brought against the County for its refusal to disclose such material, trade secrets or other propriety information to any party making a request thereof.

Fiduciary Relationships

Every proposed contractor must identify the fiduciary relationship between themselves and the County of Macon.

A formal financial agreement will be developed between the two entities in which the contracting agency shall reimburse the subcontractor for all costs on a line-item basis budget, not to exceed the total allowable contractual amount.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Complete Attachments:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet - Attachment A
2. Fiscal Standards Questionnaire - Attachment B
3. Statement of Assurances - Attachment C
4. Youth Program Elements - Attachment D
5. Proposed Program Outcomes - Attachment E
6. Pre-Award Risk Assessment - Attachment F
7. Budget – Attachment G

NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS:

1) Introduction (EVALUATION FACTOR: 20 POINTS-LIMIT FIVE PAGES)

- Briefly identify your agency/program
- Number of years your organization has been in business
- The purpose, activities and services of your organization
- Groups/populations you serve (your target audience/customer base)
- Describe your organization's experience and performance in providing proposed services for youth
- Provide a brief overview of proposed program including a description of how the proposed program fits into your organization's missions and goals
- Provide a justification for the Request for Funding
 - Calculate the contract cost per WIOA youth enrolled in the program
- State the objectives to be achieved through this funding

2) Program & Design Elements (EVALUATION FACTOR: 50 POINTS – LIMIT 10 PAGES)

- a. Describe, in detail, the activities that will take place in the proposed program.
- b. Explain how the program will identify and recruit potential WIOA eligible youth and how participants will be selected for enrollment. (Note: it is the responsibility of the program to obtain the necessary documentation needed from each youth in order for WIS to determine eligibility – for example, completed WIS application, birth certificate, state ID etc.)
- c. Describe orientation/assessment activities. Include assessment tools, instruments and methods your program will use to determine the needs of WIOA youth.
NOTE: TABE 11-12 is the required test for documenting reading and math scores. Program is required to purchase and use TABE 11-12 (paper based or computer based).
- d. How will your program provide case management, address barriers and/or needs in relation to providing appropriate intervention at the right time with age appropriate activities for the youth.
- e. Describe how each participant's goals will be developed, evaluated, and coordinated with WIS staff.
- f. Describe where the programs activities will take place, and accessibility for all participants to be served.
- g. Describe what methods will be used to record time, attendance and progress of participants.
- h. Describe linkages you have made with employers and how the program will be linked to careers, post-secondary education, job placement, and completion of education.
- i. Describe all possible collaborations with other agencies, schools etc.

- j. Provide a matrix describing all aspects of the proposed program
- k. Describe the length and intensity of program design, staff-to-youth ratio
- l. Describe how the program will provide the 14 **Youth Program Elements** - Attachment D *Workforce Investment Solutions provides supportive services, paid work experience and follow-up services. Proposals need only address how these program elements will be linked to the project.*

3) Outcomes (EVALUATION FACTOR: 30 POINTS – LIMIT 5 PAGES)

Services should be designed and delivered within a context that maintains focus on, and is relevant to, career development, educational attainment and employment. (See performance measures described earlier)

- a. Identify the outcomes for youth who will attend your program, and how these outcomes will positively impact the **FIVE** WIOA youth performance measures
- b. Describe how your program design will produce the outcomes you have identified
- c. Outline how participant progress will be measured and reported to WIS
- d. Complete the Program Outcomes Form Attachment E

4) Position Descriptions of Staff Involved

- a. Attach position descriptions of the staff positions **for which funds are requested** to provide program services along with an approved salary schedule as applicable.

5) Applicant Pre-Award Risk Assessment Questionnaire

Service provider's applying through this RFP are responsible for completing the Youth Provider Applicant Risk Assessment Questionnaire. (Attachment F) This assessment will be reviewed by the RFP review team as well as the LWIA #19 administrative staff.

6) Budget – see budget instructions - Attachment G. Download forms from WIS website – see instructions under Application Requirements and Submission Information #1.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Application and attachments are provided on the WIS website at www.worknetdeatur.org/workforce-investment-board/
2. Complete the Proposal Cover Sheet, Attachment A. This form must include the title, address and telephone number of the person or persons who will be authorized to present the proposal and the names of all collaborators. An agency officer authorized to bind the agency to all commitments made in the proposal must sign the form.
3. Electronic submission of proposals is due by 4:00pm on Friday, April 9, 2021 to Workforce Investment Solutions via email to wisgrantapplication@mdwis.org. When submitting the proposal, please list in the Subject Line **“WIS Youth Grant” and name of the applying organization**. Please submit the proposal as a PDF file. A receipt will be emailed when proposal is received. If proposers do not receive an email receipt it is their responsibility to contact Debbie Wright, Workforce Investment Solutions at (217) 875-8722, or dwright@mdwis.org to verify receipt of the proposal.
4. Narratives must address and follow the outline as described in the “Narrative Instructions” on page 9 of the RFP. Print all narratives on 8-1/2”x 11” plain white paper with margins of 1” on each side. All narratives must be printed on a minimum of 12-point type single spaced.

5. Pages must be numbered sequentially and each page should have a footer with the name of the agency submitting the proposal. Each narrative must contain the heading, which clearly indicates the question being answered.
6. Please use the indicative mood (will, shall, etc.) in narratives rather than the subjunctive (would, should, etc.) so that proposals can easily be converted to contract form.
7. All Exhibits to be submitted are specified in the RFP. Additional exhibits will not be accepted.
8. Answers should be as concise as possible while providing all the information requested.
9. Please include a list of all collateral material, handbooks, etc., that will be used in the classroom portion of the program. If computer software is listed, it must be available for preview prior to final approval of the program. Also, anything purchased with WIOA funds remain the property of Macon County and must be listed in the RFP for consideration.

The LWIA #19 review committee will evaluate the proposals and make recommendations to the Local Workforce Investment Board for action. Proposals will be rated for program design, organizational capacity to provide services, and cost and appropriateness of the budget.

Each applicant will have the opportunity to meet with the review committee to present their proposal and answer any questions concerning the proposal, budget and program design.

The LWIA #19 Workforce Investment Board will consider the recommendations of the review committee and approve accordingly. All bidders will be notified in writing regarding approval or denial.

YOUTH FUNDING: The funding amount available for contracts is subject to the allocation of federal funds by the U.S. Department of Labor and State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Funding allocations for the local area are expected in May or June of 2020. Contracts will be issued in accordance to available funding.

If you have any questions regarding this RFP, contact Rocki Wilkerson at 217-875-8720

Time Frame

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