

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**RFP NUMBER
NW145 # 09-02**

FOR

**WIA YOUTH PROGRAM SERVICES
FOR YOUNGER IN-SCHOOL YOUTH**

ISSUE DATE

MARCH 18, 2010

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS:

APRIL 23, 2010

SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO:

**WEST CENTRAL JOB PARTNERSHIP, INC.
44 South Beaver Street
New Castle, PA 16101
Attention: Program Director
724-658-2501**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose..... 04

1.2 Issuing Agency..... 04

1.3 Background..... 05

1.4 Overview of the Project..... 06

1.5 Procurement Timetable..... 07

1.6 Email Question & Answer Period; RFP Clarification Opportunity..... 07

1.7 Communication Prohibitions..... 08

SECTION II BIDDER EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

2.1 Mandatory Bidder Qualifications..... 09

2.2 Organizational Experience and Capabilities..... 09

2.3 Staff Experience and Capabilities..... 09

SECTION III YOUTH PROGRAM PRIORITIES

3.1 Linkages to Foster Participation..... 09

3.2 Focus on Industry Clusters and High Priority Occupations..... 09

3.3 Connection with Industry Partnerships..... 10

3.4 Alignment with PA’s Career Education & Work Standards..... 10

SECTION IV PROGRAM COMPONENTS & SCOPE OF WORK

4.1 In-School Youth Program..... 10

4.1.1 Recruitment Strategies..... 10

4.1.2 Objective Assessment..... 11

4.1.3 Case Management and Career Pathway & Employment Plans..... 11

4.1.4 Literacy and Numeracy..... 12

4.1.5 Labor Market Information and Career Awareness..... 13

4.1.6 Work Readiness Skills..... 14

4.1.7 Referral to Other Services..... 15

4.1.8 Adult Mentoring..... 16

4.2 Summer Youth Employment Program..... 16

4.2.1 Recruitment Strategies 16

4.2.2 Placement of Youth at Worksites..... 16

4.2.3 Operation of SYEP..... 16

SECTION V PERFORMANCE MEASURES

5.1 Entered Employment..... 17

5.2	Attainment of Degree or Certification.....	17
5.3	Additional LWIA Measures and Required Outcomes.....	17

SECTION VI CONDITIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

6.1	Interview.....	18
6.2	Start Work Date.....	18
6.3	Proposal Costs.....	18
6.4	Trade Secrets Prohibition – Public Information Disclaimer.....	18
6.5	Conditions Governing the Response.....	19
6.6	Subcontractor Identification.....	20
6.7	Monitoring of Contracts.....	20
6.8	Termination of Contracts.....	21
6.9	Mandatory Disclosure of Work Location.....	21
6.10	Bidder Selection Restriction.....	21
6.11	Required Bidder Information.....	21

SECTION VII PROPOSAL FORMAT & SUBMISSION

7.1	Proposal Submission Information.....	22
7.2	Format for Organization of the Proposal.....	23

SECTION VIII CRITERIA FOR PROPSAL EVALUATION & SELECTION

8.1	General Factors Affecting the Selection of a Contractor.....	28
8.2	The Selection Process.....	29

SECTION IX APPENDICES

9.1	Sample Master Agreement	
9.2	Sample Transmittal Letter	
9.3	Agency Information	
9.4	Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Eligibility	
9.5	Lobbying Activities	
9.5.1	Certification Regarding Lobbying OR	
9.5.2	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	
9.6	Drug Free Workplace Requirements Certification	
9.7	Equal Opportunity Assurance	
9.8	Financial Plan Format	
9.9	Proposal Evaluation Criteria	
9.9.1	Initial Evaluation	
9.9.2	Technical Evaluation	
9.10	HIPAA Business Associate Agreement	

SECTION 1. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Purpose

West Central Job Partnership (WCJP) issues this Request For Proposal (RFP) to solicit innovative workforce development programs for younger in-school youth to operate under the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act. The aim is to receive a wide variety of innovative proposals that best meet the needs of the younger in-school youth in the community at large. This RFP solicits proposals designed to reduce the number of youths, within the targeted population group, that drop out of school by guiding and assisting them in making informed choices during their high school years.

Most secondary school dropouts have a little or no significant work history and have not developed any marketable occupational skills. Many lack career awareness or direction and have not developed the interpersonal skills needed to gain and hold employment. Many of these individuals are unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job.

All too frequently, these individuals will become unemployed, sometimes for a lengthy period of time, and dependent upon public assistance or other forms of subsidization or will become underemployed, with little hope for long-term employment or advancement.

Specifically the proposed project should engage in-school youth ages 16 – 21 enrolled in eleventh and twelfth grades in opportunities that result in educational gains, occupational skills attainment, work readiness, work experience, enrolled in post-secondary education, military or employment.

1.2 Issuing Agency

This RFP is issued by West Central Job Partnership, Inc. (WCJP), 44 South Beaver Street, New Castle, PA 16101. WCJP is a private non-profit corporation created by the elected or appointed Commissioners for both Lawrence County and Mercer County and chartered under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The County Commissioners, by joint resolution, designated West Central Job Partnership, Inc. as the grant recipient and fiscal agent for all Workforce Investment Act funds as well as United States Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) funds made available to the West Central Workforce Investment Area, which consists of Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

With 24 years of experience in workforce development, WCJP continues to provide and improve job training services, including job counseling and assessment, individual training accounts, and on the job training to residents of Lawrence and Mercer Counties.

WCJP will administer the contract and will be responsible for supervision of all activities of the selected vendor.

1.3 Background

The local Workforce Investment Board will support and work with Local Educational Agencies to establish a comprehensive program for economically disadvantaged, in-school youth who are at risk of dropping out of school. That program will be designed to provide: opportunities to participate in tutoring, study skills training, or instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies; opportunities to participate in instructional activities needed to prepare the individual for post-secondary educational opportunities; opportunities for a youth to validate vocational choices through participation in job shadowing; opportunities to participate in contextual learning activities which integrate the development of general occupational competencies with the development of academic skills or which emphasize the linkages between academic and occupational learning; opportunities to acquire job readiness and pre-employment skills and occupational skills needed to prepare for unsubsidized employment; opportunities to receive adult mentoring from individuals having strong employer connections; opportunities to participate in leadership development activities; opportunities to receive comprehensive guidance and counseling services, including substance abuse counseling; and, opportunities to receive information regarding the full array of supportive services available locally through public agencies and community based organizations and to receive referrals to appropriate providers, when necessary.

WIB goals for youth include Expanding Youth Awareness for Careers of Tomorrow:

- Encourage interaction between the workforce system and Project 720 schools.
- Provide and advise Career and Technical Schools regarding local/regional industry data to assist them in obtaining relevant equipment and adjusting curriculum to meet local needs.
- Support local schools and organizations providing services to youth by making available information relevant to high priority occupations and the needs of local businesses.
- Link education and business to better organize the workforce pipeline for graduates seeking jobs.

The Workforce Investment Act has required elements that must be addressed by all contractors. The following section is excerpted for the Workforce Investment Act, Sections 129 (a), (b), and (c). 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 education 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.”*

Section 129 (c)(1) of the Act requires that all programs:

- Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant;

- Develop service strategies for each participant that shall identify an employment goal;
- Provide preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities, in appropriate cases;
- Establish strong linkages between academic and occupational learning;
- Prepare participants for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases, and
- Develop effective connections to intermediaries with strong links to the job market and local/regional employers.

Proposals must contain all of the ten required program elements listed below. If a required program element is not provided by the proposer directly, the proposal should state the strategy the proposer will follow and the potential partner(s) who may provide the element, and how the participant will access the required element. Required program elements (WIA §129 (c) (2)) are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. Alternative secondary school services, as appropriate;
3. Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
4. As appropriate, paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. Occupational skill training, as appropriate;
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours, as appropriate;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completion of participation, as appropriate; and
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, appropriate.

1.4 Overview of the Project

The local Workforce Investment Area consists of Lawrence County and Mercer County, Pennsylvania. The geographical area to be served by the proposed project must include all of at least one of these two counties. The contractor may elect to serve eligible individuals residing in one county only or may elect to serve eligible individuals residing in both counties. The contractor will be expected to serve a minimum of 75¹ eligible eleventh and twelfth grade students in each county. Eleventh grade students who are carried over for service as a twelfth grader (upon WCJP approval for a contract extension will count toward the aggregate total of 75 enrollments. Graduates carried over from the previous year will not count toward the aggregate total enrollment.

¹ If TANF monies are available to serve 9th and 10th graders WCJP will negotiate with successful bidder to add additional youth and commensurate costs.

1.5 Procurement Timetable

DATE	EVENT/ACTIVITY
March 18, 2010	WCJP releases RFP to potential bidders; Q&A period opens -RFP becomes active -Bidders may submit inquiries for RFP clarification
April 02, 2010	All potential bidders should submit a Notice of Interest by 4:30 pm either by fax 724-658-4252 or by email to ddonahue@wcjp.org in order to receive a summary of clarifying questions and answers to the RFP.
April 02, 2010	Bidder Q&A period closes, 10:00 am (for inquiries on RFP clarification) -No further inquiries for RFP clarification will be accepted
April 09, 2010	WCJP provides final vendor question & answer document
April 23, 2010	Deadline for bidders to submit proposals to WCJP, no later than 12:00 noon. -This is the proposal opening date, beginning the WCJP process of proposal review.
May 13, 2010	WCJP issues contract award notification letter (estimated) -Bidders that submitted proposals in response to this RFP will be sent letters stating whether their proposal was accepted for award of the contract.
July 01, 2010	Contract begin date – (estimated, following notification of all contractual and funding approvals)
June 30, 2011	Contract end date – All work must be satisfactorily completed by this date and approved by WCJP. Based on performance and availability of funding, contracts may be eligible for optional yearly extensions for a second and third year.

1.6 Email Question & Answer Period; RFP Clarification Opportunity

Potential bidders may ask clarifying questions regarding this RFP via email during the Q&A Period as outlined in Section 1.6, Anticipated Procurement Timetable. To ask a question, potential bidders must prepare the question in writing and forward it to WCJP's Program Director at ddonahue@wcjp.org. The potential bidder must also include the name of a representative of the potential bidder, the company name, the representative's email address and business phone number. WCJP may, at its option, disregard any questions which do not appropriately reference an RFP provision or location, or which do not include identification for the originator of the question. WCJP will not respond to any questions submitted after **noon** on the date the Q&A period closes.

WCJP responses to all questions asked via email will be compiled into one document and sent to all potential bidders by email. Bidder proposals in response to this RFP are to take into account any information communicated by WCJP in the Final Q&A Document for the RFP.

There is an established time period for the bidder Q&A process (as outlined in Section 1.6, Anticipated Procurement Timetable). WCJP will only answer those questions submitted within the stated time frame

for submission of bidder questions, and which pertain to issues of RFP clarity, and which are not requests for public information. **WCJP is under no obligation to acknowledge questions submitted through the Q&A process if those questions are not in accordance with these instructions.**

Should potential bidders experience technical difficulties in submitting email as outlined above, they may contact the WCJP Office at 724-658-2501 Extension 212 for guidance.

1.7 Communication Prohibitions

From the issuance date of this RFP until an actual contract is awarded to a bidder, there may be no communication concerning the RFP between any bidder that expects to submit a proposal and any employee of WCJP in the issuing office, or any other WCJP employee, or any other individual regardless of their employment status, who is in any way involved in the development of the RFP or the selection of the contractor. Bidders are not entitled to information about the amount of money available for the contract.

The only exceptions to this prohibition are as follows:

1. Communications conducted pursuant to Section 1.6, Email Q&A Period;
2. As necessary in any pre-existing or on-going business relationship between WCJP and any bidder that could submit a proposal in response to this RFP;
3. As part of any bidder interview process or proposal clarification process initiated by WCJP, which WCJP deems necessary in order to make a final selection;
4. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, WCJP will send those revisions, amendments, etc. to all potential bidders via email; and
5. Any request for public record information made through the WCJP Office.

WCJP is not responsible for the accuracy of any information regarding this RFP that was obtained or gathered through a source other than the Q&A process described in this RFP. Any attempts at prohibited communications by bidders may result in the disqualification of those bidders' proposals.

SECTION 2. BIDDER EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Bidders' proposals must address all the following minimum qualifications as well as organizational and staff experience and capabilities:

2.1. Mandatory Bidder Qualifications

WCJP will only consider proposals from bidders with a minimum of 3 years experience developing and implementing youth programs. Preference will be given to bidders that can operate program activities during the regular school day at local area schools.

2.2 Organizational Experience and Capabilities

In order to be considered for the contract expected to result from this RFP, WCJP requires that interested bidders provide names and contact information for at least three entities for which they have performed similar projects in the past 3 years.

Provide a timeline for each component of the scope of work and the project overall, including the staff hours for personnel involved. Include a Table of Organization (including any subcontractors) and a chart showing the number of hours devoted to the project by bidder or subcontractor staff. The bidder must provide the percentage of time each key management person will devote to the project.

2.3 Staff Experience and Capabilities

The bidder must demonstrate significant expertise by assigning staff to key leadership roles for this project. The vendor must, at minimum, identify by position and by name those staff they consider key to the project's success and include resume(s) of key staff expected work on the project. Provide a current organizational chart (including any subcontractors) and specify the key management and administrative personnel who will be assigned to this project; and

Bidders who do not meet all of the above experience and qualifications will be disqualified from further consideration for contract award.

SECTION 3. YOUTH PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals should focus on and incorporate the following priorities:

3.1 Ensure Appropriate Links to Entities that will Foster the Participation of Youth Most in Need

The proposal must describe how the contractor will establish linkages during the program year with the school districts and other agencies located within the service area for the purpose of identifying and recruiting eligible youth most in need, especially youth in foster care, youth in the juvenile justice system, children of incarcerated parents, and youth with disabilities.

3.2 Focus on Industry Clusters and High Priority Occupations in the Local Workforce Investment Area

All program activities need to be connected to the Industry Clusters (identified in Section 4.1.5 of this RFP) and the High Priority Occupations (identified by the Center for Workforce Information Analysis):

http://www.wcjp.org/documents/2009_w_central_hpos.pdf for WCJP's local HPOs

<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=575349&mode=2> for State HPOs

3.3 Connect With the Industry Partnerships that include West Central Job Partnership

The contractor will be responsible to connect with WCJP's Industry Partnerships and the private sector to create internships, job shadowing, mentoring, apprenticeships, work experience and employment opportunities. The contractor will introduce youth to dvds and other materials produced by the Industry Partnerships operated in the Local Workforce Investment Area. Copies of the materials will be provided to the contractor by WCJP.

3.4 Align With Pennsylvania Department of Education's Career Education and Work Standards

Connect all program activities to the age appropriate benchmarks of PA's Career Education and Work Standards (CEWS).

<http://www.pacareerstandards.com/documents/career-education-and-work-standards.pdf>

SECTION 4. PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND SCOPE OF WORK

There are two distinct program components to be operated for younger youth that all potential bidders need to include in their proposals: 1. In School Youth Program (ISY) and 2. Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). All bidders must be willing to operate both program components to be considered for approval. Both program components will operate under one contract from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 with options for a second and third year extension based on satisfactory performance and availability of funding.

4.1 In-School Youth Component

The ISY component must include the 10 WIA Program Elements described in Section 1.3 above and will run year round from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 for the purposes of recruitment and case management contacts with participants. Activities will be scheduled during the regular school year of all participating school districts. A second and third year contract extension may be awarded by WCJP based on satisfactory performance and availability of funding.

In addition to the framework described earlier, the proposal should identify how the following fundamentals will be incorporated into the project and must describe the strategies, methodologies, or means that the contractor will employ to perform or deliver the services included in the scope of each of the following:

4.1.1 RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

The contractor is responsible to conduct outreach and recruitment activities, within the geographical area being served and provide timely referrals to WJCP staff for eligibility determination. The proposal must describe how the contractor will establish linkages during the program year with the school districts located within the service area for the purpose of identifying

and recruiting eligible youth most in need, especially youth in foster care, youth in the juvenile justice system, children of incarcerated parents, and youth with disabilities. The contractor must obtain a letter of support from every school district receiving services. WCJP will assist in the selection of school districts for each county and reserves the right to make the final selection on school districts to be served.

The contractor will be responsible to complete outreach and recruitment as close to the beginning of the school year as possible in order to maximize the service and activity time for each youth. At a minimum, new youth enrollments should meet the following cumulative benchmarks which include carryover participants:

November 30, 2010	40
December 31, 2010	60
January 31, 2011	75

4.1.2 PROVIDE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF EACH YOUTH

The contractor is responsible for conducting an objective assessment on all youth, prior to the youth's participation in any subsidized activity which includes a review of the academic levels, skill levels, service requirements of each youth including a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitude, supportive services and developmental needs including interests and aptitude for non-traditional jobs. The contractor will obtain information from the school districts to assist in the determination of academic levels and vocational interests. The contractor's review must take into account youth's family situation and the youth's attitudes, motivation, and behavioral patterns.

Instruments used for assessment may be developed at the local level; however, any formalized instruments nationally available must be used only for the specific populations for which norms have been established. All assessment tools/systems must be approved by West Central Job Partnership.

Recent assessments adopted or developed and utilized by the participant's school may be used. Documentation showing the results of all assessments must be on file in the youth's individual case record. Objective assessment should be treated as an ongoing process. As additional relevant information relating to a youth becomes available, it should be reviewed and considered for inclusion in the youth's Career Pathway and Education Plan.

4.1.3 CASE MANAGEMENT INCLUDING A CAREER PATHWAY AND EMPLOYMENT PLAN FOR EACH YOUTH

Case Management includes the coordination of services, guidance and the development of a Career Pathway and Employment Plan (CPEP) that outlines and tracks strategies to identify career, education and employment goals for youth, prior to the youth's participation in any subsidized

activity.

The CPEP is a case management tool used as the basic instrument for recording the results of decisions made about the combination and sequence of services for the youth based upon the objective assessment of the youth's individual needs. A copy of the form or copies of the forms to be used by the contractor for the purpose of recording those decisions must be submitted with the proposal.

The CPEP must also contain a schedule of age-appropriate career goals (a minimum of two career choices and pathways needed to achieve the goals) and consideration of the assessment results for each youth. The CPEP must be developed in partnership with the youth and must reflect the needs indicated by the objective assessment and the expressed interests and desires of the youth.

Decisions concerning age-appropriate services must be youth-centered and must ensure that the youth is not excluded from training or career options because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or political affiliation or belief.

Justification for decisions may be referenced but need not be recorded in the CPEP. The CPEP is not a contract and signatures are not required. A copy of the CPEP must be on file in the youth participant's individual case record.

Each participant's attendance and progress in attaining his or her individual goals must be assessed, recorded, and reported to WCJP monthly; however, the contractor must intervene immediately to guide, assist, or support a youth participant when attendance or performance problems or special needs are identified. Written case notes regarding attendance at scheduled activities and progress reports must be recorded in the participant's file.

The CPEP must be reviewed quarterly to evaluate the progress of each youth in meeting individual goals, including (if appropriate) an evaluation of the youth's progress in acquiring skills and the adequacy of any services provided.

4.1.4 ADDRESS LITERACY AND NUMERACY DEFICIENCIES AND INCREASE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The proposal must describe the strategies to increase literacy and numeracy gains and provide or connect youth to academic instruction who are functioning behind their grade level and increase their understanding of how academic skills acquired in the classroom are applied in the workplace. Pre- and post-tests must be completed to determine skill attainment levels utilizing the following Commonwealth approved assessment tools: ABLE; BEST; BEST Plus; TABE (9-10). Documentation of reading and math grade levels may also be obtained from the school district in which the youth is enrolled as long as the test(s) were administered within the previous year. The proposal must also increase academic achievement by helping students stay in school, graduate, continue their education, earn certificates/credentials or obtain employment.

4.1.5 LABOR MARKET and CAREER AWARENESS

All eligible youths must attend and take part in activities that are designed to increase their awareness of current High Priority Occupations in both State-wide and local labor markets areas, vocational education opportunities within both the Commonwealth and the local Workforce Investment Area, and/or the availability of Federal, State and Local employment services.

Labor market awareness activities may include classroom presentations, career expositions/fairs, labor market orientation programs, and field trips to places of employment and to vocational training providers located within the two-county area.

Participants must be introduced to advanced technical or vocational training programs and registered apprenticeship programs that lead to occupational certification or licensing as well as to post-secondary education programs that lead to two and four-year college degrees.

Activities should focus on introducing youth to one or more of Pennsylvania's Targeted Industry Clusters with particular emphasis on those clusters represented in the local Workforce Investment Area and on those occupations that do not require a four-year college degree. Pennsylvania's eleven (11) targeted industry clusters (and seven sub-clusters) currently include:

1. Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing
 - a. Chemicals, Rubber and Plastics
 - b. Electronics
 - c. Metals and Metal Fabrication
 - d. Printing
 - e. Vehicle and Vehicle Equipment
2. Agriculture and Food Production
3. Building and Construction
4. Business and Financial Services
 - a. Business Services
 - b. Finance and Insurance
5. Education
6. Information and Communication Services
7. Bio-Medical
8. Health Care
9. Logistics and Transportation
10. Lumber Wood and Paper
11. Energy

The Contractors will be required to introduce youth to and instruct them in the use of the Pennsylvania CareerLink website (<https://www.cwds.state.pa.us>) to explore the occupational possibilities and employment opportunities available within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The contractor will introduce youth to dvds and other materials produced by the Industry Partnerships operated in the Local Workforce Investment Area. Copies of the materials will be

provided to the contractor by WCJP

Labor market awareness activities should also include the identification of nontraditional jobs for both male and female participants, provide information about available nontraditional training programs, offer counseling regarding barriers that may prohibit entry into a nontraditional field, and explain the resources available to assist with training costs and the elimination of barriers.

The contractor is responsible for providing youth participants with the information needed to make informed decisions or choices regarding their future education and employment. The proposal should include activities designed to provide participants with complete, accurate, and up-to-date information about demand occupations, the educational requirements for those occupations, and the availability of training services in the local area. The proposal must also include activities designed to assist participants in identifying two age-appropriate career goals and pathways suited to their interests and in acquiring knowledge of the earnings, duties, and skill requirements for the occupations(s) identified.

4.1.6 DEVELOP PARTICIPANTS' WORK READINESS SKILLS

The contractor is responsible for introducing all eligible youth to the skills needed to obtain and retain employment. The proposal must include activities designed to permit participants to acquire knowledge of fundamental employment rules and employer expectations and to demonstrate the application of employability skills.

4.1.6.1 JOB SHADOWING and/or CAREER PATH TRACING

Participants may complete one or more job-shadowing assignments during the program year that introduce them to jobs in their assessed areas of occupational interests, skills, and aptitudes.

Job shadowing assignments consist of workplace visits designed to introduce a youth to the operation and types of jobs available in a particular occupational area through observation of persons performing those jobs.

Visits must involve one-on-one contact with an individual engaged in the occupational area being examined and are completed in one day. Work experience is limited to contextual learning opportunities. Participants may not engage in performing productive work although hands-on application of general occupational competencies may be used to enhance observations.

Generally, the participant should gain an understanding of the workplace's overall operations and the role of the occupation in those operations. Specifically, the participant should acquire knowledge of the duties and skill requirements for the occupation observed.

This component may include assisting participants to find part-time employment and documenting their job readiness skills through the employer(s).

4.1.6.2 LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

Youth may attend and take part in one or more training session that focuses on developing general life skills. Those skills training may include but are not limited to:

- a. Interpersonal Skills (*e.g.*, determining priorities and decision making, problem solving, anger management, self-esteem building, coping with adversity, resisting drug use influences from the media and peer, etc.).
- b. Intra personal Social Skills (*e.g.*, understanding group dynamics, working as a team member, organizing and leading a team, dealing with diversity, accepting and benefitting from constructive criticism, etc.).

4.1.7 REFERRAL TO OTHER SERVICES

This is the process by which eligible participants are assisted in coping with personal problems that may interfere with educational achievement or school completion; *e.g.*, substance abuse, delinquency, pregnancy or parenting, family neglect or abuse, eating disorders, learning or developmental impairments, school attendance or behavior, or other risk factors.

Education, guidance and counseling services must be performed by professional staff who can demonstrate, though both experience and training, mastery of the requisite technical skills needed to perform those services in an appropriate and effective manner.

The proposal must reveal the means and describe the methodologies to be employed by the contractor to link participants with other appropriate community services.

At a minimum, the contractor must ensure linkages with all partners in the CareerLink® Service Delivery System by establishing and maintaining, a physical presence in the appropriate CareerLink®. Physical presence is defined as co-locating the direct service staff members (staff who provide the services, facilitate activities, etc. at the appropriate CareerLink® or both CareerLinks® if proposing to serve both counties.

All referrals and services obtained as a result of a referral by the contractor and the outcomes of such services must be recorded in the youth participant's file.

To document the receipt and determine the adequacy of any service(s) rendered by another provider, the contractor must follow up on all referrals made. Follow up contacts should be made with both the participant and provider.

4.1.8 ADULT MENTORING

The contractor is responsible for recruiting, screening, training, and overseeing adult volunteers who could provide individualized counseling, guidance, tutoring, or coaching to any eligible youth participant determined, through objective assessment, as in need of or capable of benefitting from the influence of a responsible adult. The contractor is responsible to secure ACT 33/34 and FBI clearances for all volunteers/mentors who will have direct contact with youth participants and shall provide WCJP with documentation verifying that such clearances have been obtained.

4.2 Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) Component

The SYEP component should provide youth employment in career fields of interest in High Priority Occupations within Lawrence and/or Mercer Counties' targeted industry clusters, and assist in increasing occupational and transferable skills. The SYEP component will run year round from July 1, 2010 to September 30, 2010.

The SYEP component must include the following:

4.2.1 RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Section 4.1.1 describes methodologies to recruit eligible youth and will apply to both program components. The contractor is also responsible to conduct outreach and recruitment activities, within the geographical area being served to identify employers (private and public sector) who are willing to act as paid or unpaid work experience as sites for SYEP participants during the summer. The proposal must describe how the contractor will establish linkages during the program year to identify employers who will host SYEP participants.

4.2.2 PLACE PARTICIPANTS AT SYEP WORKSITES

Match participants to participating worksites/employers aligned, to the extent possible, with the career and employment goals.

4.2.3 CONTRACTOR EXPECTATIONS FOR OPERATION OF THE SYEP

In this section, bidders must acknowledge their acceptance of the following responsibilities:

- Orientations - The contractor will be responsible to conduct orientations outlining program activities and expectations, required documentation and postings, policies and procedures, and all applicable laws including Child Labor Laws. Orientations will be required for every participant, employer, and all supervisors who will work directly with participants.
- Employer/Worksite Paperwork – Obtain signatures on Worksite Agreements and participant work readiness evaluations, distribute applicable employment/participant postings, collect documentation of clearances of worksite employees, etc.
- Participant Timecards - distribute and collect participant timecards at all participating employers, review timecards for accuracy of calculations.
- Participant Work Readiness Evaluations – Instruct worksite supervisors on the completion of participant work readiness evaluations for the beginning and the end of the program.

SECTION 5. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

It is expected that all WIA funded programs meet and/or contribute to the achievement of the negotiated performance levels of the WIA Common Performance Measures. Therefore, the successful bidder will be required to meet the following performance goals prescribed by the Commonwealth²:

5.1 Entered Employment – 67% of all participants who exit the program

Positive outcomes include placement in:

- Military service
- Post-secondary education
- Employment

5.2 Attainment of Degree or Certificate – 67% of all participants who exit the program

Attainment of a degree or approved certificate is met when youth attain a high school diploma.

5.3 Additional LWIA Measures and Required Outcomes:

The following LWIA measures and program outcomes listed are designed to assess program outcomes and the overall success of the program and will be monitored by WCJP on a regular basis:

- Participation - ISY participants must receive a minimum of five hours of activities per month. More hours are strongly encouraged and may occur during non-traditional hours such as evenings and weekends.
- Attendance – 85% of all ISY participants enrolled must attend 85% of their scheduled hours.
- Program Retention - 85% of all ISY participants must actively participate in the program for the entire year.
- Grade Promotion or High School Graduation – 85% of all ISY enrolled participants must pass to the twelfth grade or graduate from high school.
- Work Readiness Skills Increase – 85% of all SYEP participants must increase work readiness skills.

SECTION 6 CONDITIONS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Through this section of the RFP, WCJP notifies bidders seeking award of a contract of certain conditions and requirements which may affect their eligibility or willingness to participate in any procurement process; or their eligibility to be awarded a contract; and of requirements that would be in effect should they be awarded a contract.

²The Commonwealth negotiates performance measures with the LWIA yearly for the next program year. Therefore, performance measures listed in this RFP are subject to change. New performance measures will be issued to all potential bidders as soon as they are received from the Commonwealth.

6.1 Interview

Bidders submitting proposals may be required to participate in an in-depth interview as part of the evaluation process. The interview, if necessary, may include individuals from WCJP, or members of the Training Review Committee, as appropriate. WCJP reserves the right to select from responding bidders for interviews and may not interview all bidders submitting proposals. The bidder shall bear all costs of any scheduled interview.

6.2 Start Work Date

The selected bidders must be able to begin work no later than seven (7) working days after notification the bidder was selected for the project. The selected bidder will be notified by WCJP when work may begin. **Any work begun by the successful bidder prior to this notification will NOT be reimbursable by WCJP.**

6.3 Proposal Costs

Costs incurred in the preparation of this proposal are to be borne by the bidder, and WCJP will not contribute in any way to the costs of the preparation. Any costs associated with interviews will also be borne by the bidder and will not be WCJP's responsibility. (see Section 6.1).

6.4 Trade Secrets Prohibition; Public Information Disclaimer

Bidders are prohibited from including any trade secret information in their proposals in response to any WCJP procurement efforts. WCJP shall consider all proposals voluntarily submitted and shall be free of trade secrets and such proposals shall, in their entirety, be made a part of the public record.

All proposals and any other documents submitted to WCJP in response to this RFP shall become the property of WCJP. This RFP and, after formal announcement by WCJP of the results of the RFP project (e.g., notices provided to responding bidders regarding bidder selection, notice of project cancellation, etc.), any proposals submitted in response to the RFP are deemed to be public records. For purposes of this section, "proposal" shall mean both the research and the proposal budgets (if opened by WCJP) submitted by the bidder, any attachments, addenda, appendices, or sample products.

Any proposals submitted in response to this or any WCJP RFP which make claims of trade secret information shall be disqualified from consideration immediately upon determination that such unallowable claim has been made.

6.5 Conditions Governing the Response

- 6.5.1 No funds are committed because of and no contract is implied by the advertisement of issuance of the RFP or by the acceptance or evaluation of any response to this RFP.
- 6.5.2 If it becomes necessary to revise any part of the RFP, an amendment will be issued to all organizations and individuals that received the basic RFP.
- 6.5.3 The contents of any proposal submitted become contractual obligations, if a contract is entered into.
- 6.5.4 Proposals that do not follow the format prescribed in Section 5 of this RFP will not be considered.
- 6.5.5 Proposals should be prepared simply and economically and should provide a straightforward, concise description of the services to be provided and the provider's ability or potentiality to perform those services satisfactorily. Elaborate presentations, beyond that sufficient to produce a complete and effective proposal, are not desired.
- 6.5.6 Proposals sent by mail must be postmarked not later than the time and date specified in the cover letter that accompanies this RFP. Hand delivered proposals must be received no later than the time and date specified in the cover letter and will be time and date stamped when delivered. Late proposals will not be considered, regardless of the reason.
- 6.5.7 The proposal must be addressed to: Program Director, West Central Job Partnership, 44 South Beaver Street, New Castle, Pennsylvania, 16101, and must be clearly and prominently labeled with the RFP Number. (See the cover letter or the title page of this RFP for the correct number.)
- 6.5.8 The proposal must be separated into two parts, a TECHNICAL PLAN and a FINANCIAL PLAN. The TECHNICAL PLAN and the FINANCIAL PLAN must be submitted in separate packages that are glued, taped, stapled, or otherwise physically closed securely. The outside of each package must be clearly and prominently labeled indicating whether it contains the TECHNICAL PLAN or the FINANCIAL PLAN and showing the RFP Number.
- 6.5.9 One original and five copies and one CD copy of the TECHNICAL PLAN; and one original and five copies and one CD copy of the FINANCIAL PLAN must be submitted. The original and each copy must be clearly and prominently labeled indicating whether it is a TECHNICAL PLAN or a FINANCIAL PLAN and showing the RFP Number.
- 6.5.10 All cost or price data related to the proposal must be kept separate from the TECHNICAL PLAN. Failure to meet this requirement will result in automatic disqualification of the proposal.
- 6.5.11 An official authorized to bind the entity submitting the proposal to its provisions must sign the proposal.

- 6.5.12 The proposal must remain valid for a period of at least ninety (90) calendar days from the date of submission.
- 6.5.13 The qualifications of the entity submitting the proposal and all information and assurances provided in the proposal are subject to verification by the issuing agency.
- 6.5.14 The contents of proposals submitted in response to an RFP remain confidential until the proposal is mutually agreed upon and becomes part of a duly executed contract.
- 6.5.15 The primary consideration in the selection process will be the submitting entity's demonstrated ability or potentiality to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of this RFP and any resultant contract.
- 6.5.16 Specific aspects of a proposal may require clarification during the evaluation process. All changes, however, must be in the nature of clarification; and, proposals may not be materially altered nor added to during the evaluation process.
- 6.5.17 All proposals received become the property of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. and will not be returned.

6.6 Subcontractor Identification

Any bidder proposing to use a subcontractor for any part of the work described in the RFP must clearly identify the subcontractor and their tasks in their proposal. The decision to subcontract may not be made after a proposal has been submitted. The proposal must include a letter from the proposed subcontractor(s), signed by a person authorized to legally bind the subcontractor, indicating the following:

- 6.6.1 The subcontractor's legal status, federal tax ID number, and principle business address;
- 6.6.2 The name, phone number, and fax number of a person who is authorized to legally bind the subcontractor to contractual obligations;
- 6.6.3 A complete description of the work the subcontractor will do;
- 6.6.4 A commitment to do the work, if the bidder is selected;
- 6.6.5 A statement that the subcontractor has read and understands the RFP, the nature of the work, and the requirements of the RFP.

Successful bidders will be required to monitor the performance of subcontractors at regular intervals. The review must include programmatic and fiscal aspects of the services delivered by the subcontractor. Administrative reviews must be conducted at least once during the contracted period. Successful bidders must maintain written monitoring reports of subcontractor reviews.

6.7 Monitoring of Contracts

WCJP may perform on-site visits, both announced and unannounced, to monitor contractor performance and to determine if the terms and conditions of the contract are being met. For the purpose of verification, the successful bidder must permit authorized agents of WCJP to inspect all documents and records pertaining to the contracted services and to interview the contractor's staff performing said services.

6.8 Termination of Contracts

All contracts and subcontracts pertaining to this RFP will contain a termination clause that allows termination for cause (*e.g.*, unacceptable contractor performance), lack of an appropriation of funds, and for convenience by the issuing agency, if appropriate. This clause will include the manner by which the termination will be effected and the basis for settlement.

6.9 Mandatory Disclosure of Work Location

Proposals must explicitly state the location(s) (city, state/province, country) where work described in this RFP would be performed, whether by the successful bidder or by any subcontractors.

6.10 Bidder Selection Restriction

Any bidder deemed not responsible, or submitting a proposal deemed not to be responsive to the terms of this RFP, shall not be awarded the resulting contract.

6.11 Required Bidder Information

WCJP requires the following information on bidders who submit proposals in response to any procurement opportunity in order to facilitate the development of the contract with the successful bidder:

- 6.11.1 Bidder's Name (legal name of the bidder – person or organization – to whom contract payments would be made.)
- 6.11.2 Bidder's Federal Tax ID Number or Social Security Number
- 6.11.3 Bidder Corporate Address
- 6.11.4 Bidder Remittance Address (if different from the Corporate address)
- 6.11.5 The name, title, address, phone number and email of the bidder's representative/contact person authorized to answer questions on the proposal and address contractual issues
- 6.11.6 Sample of survey conducted in the past

Bidders must provide the required information on their letterhead as the opening page of their proposal, with the exception of the survey sample. It is to be provided as an attachment. It is mandatory that the information provided is certified with an original signature, in blue ink, from a person with authority to represent the bidder.

WCJP reserves the right to reject any proposal if this information is not provided fully, accurately, and by the deadline.

SECTION 7 PROPOSAL FORMAT & SUBMISSION

7.1 Proposal Submission Information

WCJP requires proposal submission in both paper and electronic format. The proposal must be prepared and submitted in accordance with instructions found in the Section. The proposal must be comprised of:

- **5** paper copies (**one signed original** and **four** copies) and one CD copy of the Technical Plan;

AND

- In a sealed, separate envelope, **5** paper copies (**one signed original** and **four** copies) and one CD copy of the Financial Plan.

Bidders' total proposal submissions (both the Technical Plan and Financial Plan in all required copies) must be received by WCJP complete no later than **12:00 noon on May 7, 2010**. Faxed or e-mailed submission will not be accepted.

Proposals must be addressed to:

**West Central Job Partnership
44 South Beaver Street
New Castle, PA 16101
ATTN: Proposal Review Team**

Bidders' original Technical Plan proposal and Financial Plan (proposed budget) must contain all the information and documents specified in Section 7.2, "Format for Organization of the Proposal." All copies (both paper and CD) of the original proposal must include copies of ALL information, documents, and pages in the original proposal.

Along with the Technical Plan, the bidder must submit the Financial Plan in a separate, sealed envelope/package labeled: **"NOTE: DO NOT OPEN. RFP PROPOSAL FINANCIAL PLAN ENCLOSED FOR TECHNICAL PLAN, SUBMITTED BY [BIDDER'S NAME HERE]."**

The CD copy of the Technical Plan proposal must include all components of the Technical Plan proposal, including any required or voluntary attachments to it. The CD copy of the Financial Plan must include all budgetary items that are necessary to complete the requested services. **The CD containing the Financial Plan must be submitted in the sealed envelope containing the hardcopy Financial Plan.** Both CDs must be labeled with the bidder's name, the RFP name and number, and the proposal submission date of proposal due date, at minimum. The requested CDs will be used by WCJP for archiving purposes and for fulfillment of Public Records Requests, and failure to include them or to properly label them may, at WCJP's discretion, result in the rejection of the bidder from any consideration.

All proposal submissions must be received, complete, at the specified address, vial mail or hand delivery by the specified date and time. Materials received separately from a bidder's proposal submission (*e.g.* letters of recommendation from past customers of the bidder's services) will not be added to the proposal nor considered in the review and scoring process. Materials received after the date and time as stated

above will not be included in any previous submissions, not will be considered. WCJP is not responsible for proposals incorrectly addressed or for proposals delivered to any location other than the address specified above. No confirmation of mailed proposals will be provided.

Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance by the bidder of the conditions contained in this RFP, unless clearly and specifically noted in the proposal submitted and confirmed in the contract between WCJP and the bidder selected. The successful bidder will be expected to enter into contract negotiations with WCJP. A Master Agreement will be executed by and between WCJP and the successful bidder, which sets forth the standard conditions and requirements that each party formally agrees to accept and by which each party agrees to be bound.

A sample copy of the Master Agreement is found in **APPENDIX 9.1** to this RFP. Since the Agreement contains terms that affect the deliver of contracted services, interested parties should read it carefully before preparing a proposal. The attached Agreement is provided for information purposes only and should **not** be signed and returned with the proposal.

7.2 Format for Organization of the Proposal

A. Overall Proposal Organization

Proposals must contain the following components in the order described below. Any other information thought to be relevant, but not applicable to a specific RFP section number/letter must be provided as an appendix to the proposal and so marked. WCJP reserves the right not to review submitted appendices which includes information/materials not required in the RFP. All pages beyond Section 1 shall be sequentially numbered.

The bidders' proposal **must contain the following components**, at a minimum. Wherever appropriate, sections/portions of the bidder proposal make reference by section number/letter to those RFP requirements to which they correspond.

Bidders **must** organize their proposals in the following order:

Section I

- Transmittal Letter (Appendix 9.2 of this RFP)
- Vendor Required Information (Section 6.11)

Section II

- Management Summary - In a one-page summary, present a clear and concise description of your proposed project. Provide the evaluators with sufficient information to enable them to determine what the project intends to accomplish and how the project will accomplish it.

Section III

- Scope of Work and Specifications of Deliverables (Section IV)
- Prior Experience

Relate prior experience that demonstrates your ability or potentiality to successfully conduct or perform the activities or services proposed.

If applicable, include a general description of:

- a. activities conducted or services provided by you or your organization that are the same or highly similar to those requested and/or
- b. your personal or your organization's experience in serving individuals having the same or similar characteristics as the participants described in the Scope of Work – Section IV.

Provide the names, addresses, and phone numbers of at least three (3) organizations and/or individuals that would be familiar with the quality of your work. If available, you may attach documentation received from other organizations or from former project participants expressing satisfaction with your performance.

□ Organizational Summary

Describe your organization. Indicate the form of organization under which you do business or conduct operations (*e.g.*, a unit of local government; a Federal or state government agency; a local public educational agency; a private or public post-secondary education institution; a labor union, business association, or labor/management organization; a for-profit corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship; or, a not-for-profit social service organization).

List the address of the principal administrative or business office.

Describe the principal purpose of the organization, and list the primary activities in which it routinely engages.

State the number of years your organization has been engaged in the performance of its primary activities.

State the total number of persons regularly employed, both hourly and salaried, by your organization.

Attach an organizational chart that outlines and identifies the management structure of your organization.

If applicable, list all current licenses, permits, certifications, or accreditations that relate to your organization's purpose and activities.

Section IV - Required Attachments:

- Financial Statement - Submit one complete copy of the most recent certified audit of your financial statements.

- or -

If your financial statements have not been audited, attach a written statement, dated and signed by a certified public accountant, attesting that your internal financial control structure has been examined and noting matters involving the internal control structure, if any, that might reasonably be considered as material weaknesses.

- Signatory Authority

If an individual has been authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of a corporation and he or she is not the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, or Assistant Treasurer of the corporation; attach:

(1) a copy of the corporate resolution or by-laws that authorizes the individual to sign on behalf of the corporation **or**

(2) a notarized statement, presented on the organization's letterhead and signed by the President or Vice-President **and** the Secretary or Treasurer of the corporation, authorizing that individual to sign all documents relative to this proposal and all contract agreements and amendments on behalf of the contractor.

If an individual has been authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of a partnership, attach:

(1) a copy of the minutes of partners' meeting at which the individual was formally authorized to sign on behalf of the partnership **or**

(2) a notarized statement presented on the organization's letterhead authorizing that individual to sign all documents relative to this proposal and all contract agreements and amendments on behalf of the contractor. The statement must indicate if the individual authorized to sign is a general or limited partner and must be signed by all partners.

- Agency Information Form – complete and attach the "Agency Information Form" found in **APPENDIX 9.3** of this RFP. Attach the same form completed, signed, and dated by each subcontractor proposed.

If you or any subcontractor are unable to certify to any of the listed conditions attach a detailed explanation of the circumstances which prevent you or your subcontractor from doing so.

- Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Eligibility - Attach written certification that your organization is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible from participation in this transaction by any Federal

department or agency. Use the "*Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Eligibility*" found in **APPENDIX 9.4**. Attach separate certifications signed by each subcontractor proposed.

- Lobbying Certification Form - Attach written certification that no federal appropriated funds have or will be paid for the purpose of lobbying and disclose any and all lobbying activities pursuant to the awarding of this contract. If you have not been involved in any lobbying activities, the "*Lobbying Certification Form*" found in **APPENDIX 9.5.1** should be signed, dated, and submitted. If you have been involved in any lobbying activities, complete and submit the "*Lobbying Disclosure Form SF-LLL*" also found in **APPENDIX 9.5.2**. Attach separate certifications signed by each subcontractor proposed.
- Drug Free Workplace Requirements Certification - Individuals or organizations submitting proposals to provide Federal- or State-funded activities or services must complete, execute, and submit the "*DRUG FREE WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS CERTIFICATION*" found in **APPENDIX 9.6**.
- Equal Opportunity Assurance - Individuals or organizations submitting proposals to provide Federal- or State-funded activities or services must execute, and submit the "*EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ASSURANCE*" document found in **APPENDIX 9.7**.

B. Financial Plan

Five (one signed original and four copies) copies and one CD of the Financial Plan must be submitted in a separate, sealed envelope, and labeled: “NOTE: DO NOT OPEN, RFP PROPOSAL FINANCIAL PLAN ENCLOSED FOR RESEARCH STUDY, SUBMITTED BY (Bidder’s Name Here).”

APPENDIX 9.8 to this RFP contains a fill in the blanks format you must follow to complete the FINANCIAL PLAN part of the proposal. Follow the format exactly.

Costs shown in the Budget Summary must reflect the total actual cost of the proposed project, including both programmatic and administrative costs. Program costs include those expenditures incurred in the performance of services which involve or are of direct benefit to participants in the project. Administrative costs are those expenditures incurred as a result of managing project resources and which cannot be charged directly to the performance of services to project participants.

There is no prohibition against a for-profit business earning a profit or a not-for-profit organization obtaining program income as a direct result of providing the services requested in this RFP; however, the amount of profit or program income must be clearly identified in the Budget Summary as part of the total project cost. The persons charged with the responsibility for selecting a proposal are required to determine whether or not the amount of profit or program income is reasonable in relation to the overall cost of the project.

The Budget Summary must show the amount of funds to be contributed, in cash or in-kind, by the contractor and/or other entities to pay the total cost of the project, as well as the amount of funds requested from the issuing agency.

The Budget Detail must be completed in its entirety. Even though tuition or some other form of payment per participant may be negotiated and finalized after a proposal is selected, the persons charged with the responsibility for selecting a proposal are required to determine whether or not the overall price is reasonable. To make this determination, they must have the cost detail showing how the price was determined.

Budget items and the costs thereof are subject to negotiation and modification prior to final award of a contract.

Once a contract between the contractor and WCJP has been executed, the contractor may not incur any project expense which is out of compliance with the approved FINANCIAL PLAN, or any subsequent bilateral modification thereto, without prior approval by the issuing agency. Misappropriation of project funds is grounds for termination of the contract and the return of those funds to WCJP.

SECTION 8. CRITERIA FOR PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

WCJP will contract with a bidder that best demonstrates the ability to meet requirements as specified in this RFP. Bidders submitting a response will be evaluated based on the capacity and experience demonstrated in the Research Proposal and Proposal Budget. All proposals will be reviewed and scored by a Proposal Review Team comprised of staff from WCJP and other Steering Committee members. Bidders should not assume that the Proposal Review Team members are familiar with any current or past work projects with WCJP. Proposals containing assumptions, lack of sufficient detail, poor organization, lack of proofreading, and unnecessary use of self-promotional claims will be evaluated accordingly.

Any proposals not meeting the stated requirements within this RFP will not be scored or may be held pending receipt of required clarifications. The Proposal Review Team reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, received in response to this request. The Proposal Review Team may waive minor defects that are not material when no prejudice will result to the rights of any bidder or to the public.

8.1 General Factors Affecting the Selection of a Contractor

The issuing agency desires to make awards only to an organization or an individual that has the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed contract. For this reason, demonstrated performance is the primary consideration in selecting a contractor.

The issuing agency considers the following factors in making written determinations of demonstrated performance:

- 8.1.1** The contractor has an understanding of the needs that the proposal seeks to satisfy and a familiarity with various methods or means for meeting those needs.
- 8.1.2** The contractor's proposal contains defined objectives which relate to meeting identified needs and against which the contractor's performance can be measured and verified.
- 8.1.3** The activities or services proposed by the contractor flow directly from the stated needs and objectives and demonstrate the contractor's capability to meet the project design framework requirements, achieve the project outcomes, and implement the project elements specified in Section IV of this RFP.
- 8.1.4** The contractor has sufficient staff to perform the required service satisfactorily, and the assigned staff members possess the requisite technical skills needed to perform the work in a satisfactory manner.
- 8.1.5** The contractor, during the life of the project, has control of physical facilities that are appropriate and adequate for the satisfactory performance of the proposed project.
- 8.1.6** The contractor has a past record of conducting or performing similar activities or services successfully.
- 8.1.7** The contractor is a legal entity authorized to conduct business under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and established for the purpose of conducting activities or performing services similar to those requested and is located, staffed, and structured to provide adequate management oversight.
- 8.1.8** The contractor is a legal entity authorized to conduct business under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and established for the purpose of conducting activities or performing services similar to those requested and is located, staffed, and structured to provide adequate management oversight.
- 8.1.9** The contractor has an accounting and property management system adequate to manage and safeguard the funds, property, and other assets associated with the proposed project.
- 8.1.10** The contractor is in compliance or has provided assurances of compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, orders, and rulings relative to or applicable in the administration and operation of the proposed project.
- 8.1.11** The contractor's proposed cost or price for the conduct of the project is reasonable.

8.2 The Selection Process

8.2.1 Upon receipt, each proposal received will undergo an initial review and evaluation by the WCJP staff.

The initial evaluation criteria outlined in **APPENDIX 9.9.1** will be applied to each proposal received. Proposals not meeting any one of the initial evaluation criteria may be rejected without further review and evaluation.

8.2.2 The TECHNICAL PLAN from each proposal that meets the initial evaluation criteria will be forwarded to the proposal review team, consisting of members or authorized representatives of the local Workforce Investment Board, for review and evaluation using the technical evaluation questions in **APPENDIX 9.9.2**.

8.2.3 To ensure that performance of the provider and not the price or cost of the proposal is the primary consideration in the selection process, the FINANCIAL PLAN from each proposal that meets all of the initial evaluation criteria will be forwarded to WCJP's fiscal staff for separate review and evaluation.

8.2.4 WCJP's fiscal staff will reveal their comments and recommendations concerning the FINANCIAL PLAN to the proposal review team after the TECHNICAL PLAN has been reviewed and evaluated.

8.2.5 Upon completion of its evaluations and after reviewing the comments and recommendations of the fiscal staff regarding the project cost or price, the proposal review team will determine and present its recommendations regarding the selection of a contractor or contractors to the local Workforce Investment Board for final approval or disapproval.

8.2.6 At the direction of the local Workforce Investment Board, and prior to final award of a contract, issuing agency staff may work with potential contractors to amend or clarify project activities and budgets.

NOTE: WCJP is under no obligation to issue a contract as a result of this solicitation if, in the opinion of WCJP and the proposal review team, none of the proposals are responsive to the objectives and needs of the agency. WCJP reserves the right to not select any bidder should WCJP decide not to proceed.