

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

TRADE AND ECONOMIC TRANSITION NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANT

ROUND 2

Request for Proposal

PROPOSALS DUE BY **MONDAY, JUNE 3, AT 4 P.M. EASTERN TIME**

TOM WOLF, GOVERNOR

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W. GERARD OLEKSIK, SECRETARY

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SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO:

ONE ELECTRONIC COPY *MUST* BE EMAILED TO THE ADDRESS INDICATED BELOW:

RESOURCE ACCOUNT: RA-LI-BWDA-GS@pa.gov

SUBJECT: RFP APPLICATION – **ECONOMIC TRANSITION**

SECTION 1 – PURPOSE

The purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is to competitively award funding to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to train dislocated workers in High Priority Occupations and provide the necessary supportive services to complete training under the Trade and Economic Transition National Dislocated Worker Grant (Economic Transition). This funding will focus on dislocated workers with entry-level skills or those who require minimal training for re-entry into the workforce. This emphasis will primarily focus on, but not be limited to, dislocated workers from sectors related to retail, leisure, hospitality, the service industry, and trade, transportation and utilities (TTU).

The goal of this funding is to cover the training costs of participating dislocated workers at 100 percent and to provide comprehensive supportive services for successful completion. The idea of this approach is to increase the skill level of entry-level dislocated workers to become competitive for growing or high-demand employment opportunities while simultaneously decreasing the skill gap for local employers.

SECTION 2 – BACKGROUND

Economic Transition funding is offered under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) program. The funding is authorized under Section 170 of WIOA and administered according to 20 CFR part 687.

In July 2018, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania) recorded nearly 61,000 initial unemployment insurance claims across all sectors. While dominated by claims in construction and manufacturing, almost 6,000 claims were from leisure and hospitality and another 11,000 were from job losses in TTU. These sectors traditionally employ a greater percentage of entry-level workers over other affected sectors; therefore, dislocated workers from these sectors face greater barriers to reentering the workforce.

Overall, services industries are stable or growing in Pennsylvania; however, services that can be provided without requiring human interaction, such as retail sales and travel bookings, are at risk due to technology and consumer preferences. As a greater number of transactions and events move away from human interaction, a large number of entry-level customer services positions are disappearing. Several large and small retailers have closed in Pennsylvania, and those remaining are examining their strategic place in the marketplace and seeking to ensure survival of their brand. Unfortunately, these company adaptations sometimes negatively affect entry-level employees.

SECTION 3 - FUNDING SUMMARY

The intent of this initiative is to align individuals' skillsets with existing opportunities as reported by employers. Where limited opportunities exist, examining individuals' skills and training gaps and pursuing the relevant education and training pathways may increase opportunities. This should be done in full partnership with employers, as they are among the effort's beneficiaries. Local boards should use available occupational information to discern what skills and knowledge are required to advance through a career path, which will lead to customized individual assessments and targeted training plans. Personalization of services is the key to overall workforce and economic growth.

PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) anticipates a robust referral partnership with the PA Department of Human Services (DHS), leveraging their capacity to reach over 25,000 potentially eligible Economic Transition candidates for training. Capitalizing on this existing resource will speed the transition of these individuals into

training. The primary point of contact for DHS Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training (E&T) referrals are county assistance offices (CAOs). CAO caseworkers identify participants' needs during interviews and make appropriate referrals based on the information collected. L&I and DHS intend to co-enroll prospective applicants whenever possible.

Training under this funding must be aligned to Pennsylvania's High-Priority Occupation (HPO) List or the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which targets industries identified as having the greatest opportunity for individuals to return to the workforce fully trained and prepared for career-focused employment that pays a family-sustaining wage. Training services will be provided to approximately 230 participants.

In an effort to reach dislocated workers in our changing economy, Pennsylvania is investing in alternative strategies to serve these individuals. Despite unemployment being higher than the national average in July 2018, staff at local PA CareerLink® offices have reported a lower-than-usual number of dislocated workers seeking services. Additionally, a pattern of unemployment and reemployment affecting the same individuals seems to be emerging. This pattern is especially true in customer service-related positions due to the decreasing availability of entry-level positions in this sector.

The goal of this strategic initiative is to entice dislocated workers to break the unemployment/reemployment pattern by upgrading skill levels to obtain employment in positions that are in high demand across multiple sectors. Training and upgrading the skills of these individuals will also help employers obtain the skilled workforce they require to remain competitive.

Projects should model the Economic Transition activities after the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act program and provide training reimbursement at 100 percent. By funding permitted costs at 100 percent, Pennsylvania expects to maximize recipients' opportunity to successfully re-enter the workforce in career-focused employment at a family-sustaining wage and minimize recipients' chances of having to re-engage federally funded career training and education systems in the future. Additionally, providing more holistic supportive services to individuals will encourage successful completion of training activities.

Supportive services may include assistance with transportation; assistance with child care costs; linkages to community services (including services offered by partner organizations); assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools (such as protective eye gear, etc.); assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes; assistance with payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications; and assistance with needs-related payments (available only to individuals enrolled in training services and consistent with 20 CFR 680.930, 680.940, 680.950, 680.960, and 680.970) as well as other services permissible under local areas' supportive service policies.

Therefore, these funds may be spent on training costs for Dislocated Workers at 100% reimbursement, related comprehensive supportive services for the successful completion of training, and related administrative costs up to 8.8%. All other services are to be leveraged.

This initiative will provide Pennsylvania the opportunity to evaluate a new strategy for utilizing dislocated worker resources in a way that most effectively addresses the current economic transition. Local boards that participate will be required to evaluate how this new utilization of funds addresses service delivery for individuals with barriers. If this initiative proves to be a more successful approach than traditional service delivery, Pennsylvania recommends mainstreaming this model into WIOA service delivery.

SECTION 4 – REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AVAILABILITY KEY COMPONENTS

- A. PROJECT SPONSER: This RFP is offered by the PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) utilizing federal WIOA NDWG funding.
- B. APPLICATION DEADLINE: **JUNE 3, 2019, AT 4 P.M., EASTERN TIME**
- C. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Approximately \$3,936,422.00 is available. Funding will be awarded based on the availability of funds.
- D. ANTICIPATED AWARD SIZE: L&I anticipates that funding will be competitively awarded at approximately \$450,000.00.
- E. FUNDING REAUTHORIZATIONS: L&I reserves the right to de-obligate funds for those projects that show minimal expenditure or obligation. Any funds not committed may be reallocated to other projects awarded under this RFP.
- F. REPORTING: Applicants awarded funding will be required to submit quarterly narrative reports (QNRs), monthly financial status reports (FSRs), and participate with agency staff on calls to identify project progression, share best practices, and receive technical support. The final QNR will require an evaluation of the higher reimbursement rate as indicated in Section 3. Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) data entry is required for participants supported with this funding. The QNR template and corresponding due dates will be provided to awarded applicants.

A completed closeout package is due to both the comptroller's office and the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration within 60 days after the termination date of the Notice of Obligation (NOO) or after the NOO has been fully expended (whichever occurs first).

SECTION 5 - ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include LWDBs not awarded funding under Round 1 of the Economic Transition Grant (current Economic Transition grantees please refer to the note below). Each LWDB can submit only one application except for the Three Rivers Workforce Development Board which can submit one application to serve the Pittsburgh local workforce development area and one application to serve the Allegheny local workforce development area.

NOTE: LWDBS who already have an awarded Economic Transition grant may request additional funds by contacting Grant Services at RA-LI-BWDA-GS@pa.gov.

Applicants must be capable of bringing together business, education, workforce, and provider partners to achieve the overall project goals as defined by the proposal. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate their ability to: coordinate the design of the project, develop and implement an appropriate budget, collect and report performance management measures, and coordinate and evaluate the activities of the project.

SECTION 6 - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- A. ADDRESS TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION PACKAGE: Application forms and instructions are available at the Department's Grants page: <http://www.dli.pa.gov/Businesses/Workforce-Development/grants>

B. **MANDATORY APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:** Applicants must complete all mandatory forms and any applicable optional forms in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below. Files submitted for the application **MUST** be in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word unless otherwise specified in this notice.

1. **APPLICATION FORM**

The Application must be completed in full and submitted with the other mandatory documents. The application must reflect the house and senate districts where specific funding activity will occur and not the entire local workforce development area unless applicable. The application is posted with this RFP. Save this document in a file named "ApplicationForm."

2. **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The Project Summary must contain a summary of the proposal suitable for dissemination to the public. It should be a self-contained document that identifies:

- The name of the applicant;
- Project title;
- Project service area (e.g., counties to be served);
- Objectives of the project;
- Description of the project;
- Potential impact of the project (i.e., benefits, outcomes);
- Project partners; and
- Project point of contact with contact information.

This document must not include any proprietary or sensitive business information as Pennsylvania may make it available to the public. The Project Summary must not exceed one (1) page. Save this document in a file named "ProjectSummary."

3. **PROJECT NARRATIVE (MUST ADDRESS CRITERIA 1-4)**

The Project Narrative must be formatted to clearly address the Merit Review Criteria in Section 7 (Criterion 1-4). Provide sufficient information so that reviewers will be able to evaluate the application in accordance with these merit criteria. **EVALUATORS WILL REVIEW AND CONSIDER ONLY THOSE APPLICATIONS THAT SEPARATELY ADDRESS EACH OF THE MERIT REVIEW CRITERION.**

The Project Narrative must not exceed ten (10), one-sided pages including cover page, table of contents, the statement of project objectives, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations when printed using standard 8.5" by 11" paper with 1" margins (top, bottom, left, and right) [single spaced]. **EVALUATORS WILL REVIEW ONLY THE NUMBER OF PAGES SPECIFIED IN THE PRECEDING SENTENCE.** Page numbers must be provided in the footer. Do not include any Internet addresses (URLs) that provide information necessary to review the application. Save this document in a file named "ProjectNarrative."

4. **BUDGET FORM (MUST ADDRESS CRITERION 5)**

Applicants must submit a detailed budget. The budget will be evaluated in terms of cost reasonableness and the relationship to proposed activities. Budgets must be for the time-period June 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. The budget will also become the financial basis for any award, including making cost

reimbursement payments over the course of the project. Pennsylvania reserves the right to unilaterally modify application budgets, prior to, and/or after the award. The Budget Form does not count toward the ten (10) page limit of the Project Narrative. The Budget Form is posted with this RFP. Save this document in a single file named "BudgetForm."

5. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION FORM (MUST ADDRESS CRITERION 5)

Applicants must justify, in detail and by line item, the costs proposed in each cost category and any other information to support the budget. The Budget Justification does not count toward the ten (10) page limit of the Project Narrative. The budget justification form is posted with this request for proposal. Save this document in a single file named "BudgetJustificationForm."

C. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES: Applications must be submitted by Monday, **JUNE 3, 2019, 4 P.M., EASTERN TIME**

D. OTHER SUBMISSION AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

- Application packages must be submitted ELECTRONICALLY by the application deadline.
- Electronic application packages must be submitted to RA-LI-BWDA-GS@pa.gov.
- The subject line for your email submission must include "RFP Application – Economic Transition."

SECTION 7 - APPLICATION REVIEW AND CRITERIA

A. INITIAL REVIEW CRITERIA

Prior to comprehensive merit evaluation, Pennsylvania will perform an initial review to determine the following:

- the applicant is eligible for an award;
- the information required by the announcement has been submitted;
- all mandatory requirements are satisfied; and
- the proposed project is responsive to the purpose of the RFP.

B. MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

The comprehensive merit evaluation will be conducted by a review team who will score proposals based on the degree to which the proposal addresses the following required criterion:

CRITERION 1: PROJECT APPROACH AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (50 POINTS)

- Describes how the LWDB will implement Pennsylvania's Economic Transition initiative (include how it will leverage WIOA resources and funding); (10 points)
- Describes how the LWDB will conduct outreach to target the indicated population under this initiative; (5 points)
- Describes how the training skill gaps of individuals will be identified (include case management tools and assessments); (10 points)
- Lists the comprehensive supportive services that will be provided and how these services will support the participants' successful completion of training; (5 points)
- Indicates and addresses the changes needed to local policies to implement this initiative; (5 points)
- Describes how staff will be informed and trained on the higher level of reimbursement for training activities and the more comprehensive supportive services being offered; and (10 points)

- Indicates the targeted number of individuals that will be provided training services under this initiative. (5 points)

CRITERION 2: APPLICANT/TEAM CAPABILITIES (15 POINTS)

- Identifies the partners on this project; (3 points)
- Identifies the responsibilities of the partners; (3 points)
- Identifies the ability of the applicant to implement project responsibilities of identified partners (such as case management, fiscal management and reporting); (3 points)
- Identifies applicant's prior track record related to recent NDWG, if applicable; and (3 points)
- Identifies the ability of the key personnel on the project to foster collaboration and implement programs (identify personnel by name and qualifications). (3 points)

CRITERION 3: POTENTIAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY (15 POINTS)

- Describes how the LWDB will evaluate the implementation and outcomes of this initiative in comparison to the normal program delivery for dislocated workers under WIOA; (10 points) and
- Describes how the outcomes of the above evaluation will be applied. (5 points)

CRITERION 4: FISCAL STANDARDS (5 POINTS)

- Includes a statement of financial health to include any monitoring or audit finding(s) for the past two years and status of corrective action(s) taken to resolve. (5 POINTS)

CRITERION 5: BUDGET FORM AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (15 POINTS)

- Includes a complete budget broken out by line item. (5 Points)
- Includes a detailed budget justification which contains a detailed breakout of quantity, cost, and narrative to support each line item of the budget reflective of the scope of the project. The number of participants to be served must be provided. If staff salaries will be supported by these funds, provide a description of the duties and responsibilities of each staff person to be funded. (10 Points)

SECTION 8 – COST INFORMATION

The number of proposals selected for funding will be based upon the number of proposals submitted, the funding available, and how those proposals accomplish and achieve the criteria outlined in Section 7 of this RFP.

A. ALLOWABLE COSTS

Funds available through this RFP must be used to support the training and supportive service costs for dislocated workers. All other program costs including career service costs must be leveraged. Administrative costs are permitted so long as they do not exceed 8.8% of the total award.

Applicants must build upon existing resources, including the use of existing staff, facilities, and equipment to support the submitted proposal.

B. DISALLOWABLE COSTS

Pre-award costs are incurred at the applicant's risk. The commonwealth is under no obligation to reimburse such costs if for any reason the applicant does not receive an award or if the award is made for a lesser amount than the applicant expected. Disallowed costs include:

- Building construction; and
- Procuring lobbying services.

SECTION 9 - AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

- A. **DISCUSSIONS AND AWARD:** Pennsylvania may enter discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including but not limited to: (1) the budget is not appropriate or reasonable; (2) only a portion of the application is selected for award; (3) Pennsylvania needs additional or clarifying information; and/or (4) special terms and conditions are required. Failure to satisfactorily resolve the issues identified by Pennsylvania within a specific period determined by the commonwealth may preclude award to the applicant.
- B. **RIGHT TO REJECT OR NEGOTIATE:** The commonwealth reserves the right, without qualification, to reject any or all applications received in response to this announcement and to select any application, in whole or in part, as a basis for negotiation and/or award.
- C. **COMMITMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS:** The contracting officer is the only individual who can make awards or commit Pennsylvania to the expenditure of public funds. A commitment by other than the contracting officer, either explicit or implied, is invalid.
- D. **NOTICES:** Each applicant shall be notified in writing within 30 days after the award/denial decision is made regarding the submitted application.
- E. **AWARDEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Awardees will be required to enter into a workforce grant agreement with the L&I unless a current grant agreement is already in place. By applying awardees are agreeing to the terms of grant award.

SECTION 10 - QUESTIONS/AGENCY CONTACTS

- A. **QUESTIONS:** Questions regarding the content of this RFP must be submitted, in writing, via RA-LI-BWDA-GS@pa.gov.