

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**RFP NUMBER
NW145 # 09-03**

FOR

**WIA PROGRAM SERVICES
FOR
ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKERS,
OLDER YOUTH and EARN**

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**

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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: adults, dislocated workers, and older youth participants to operate under the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); and eligible participants referred by the County Assistance Offices to operate under the provisions of the Employment And Retention Network (EARN) program funded by the Department of Public Welfare's Bureau of Employment & Training Program (BETP). The aim is to receive a wide variety of innovative proposals that best meet the needs of the target populations (referenced above) in the community at large.

This RFP solicits proposals designed for the successful bidder to provide a variety of services and activities at the PA CareerLink® locations in Lawrence and Mercer Counties. Eligible participants will be scheduled by their WCJP case managers to attend various activities designed to provide: increased literacy and numeracy levels; instruction that leads to taking and passing the GED; an increase in job readiness skills which leads to the ACT recognized WorkKeys® certification and employment; and skills training that leads to locally recognized credential, state or national accreditation. All activities will be geared toward the expected outcomes of: placement of eligible participants into post-secondary education and training to learn new occupational skills; and/or placement directly into employment with family sustaining wages.

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, United States Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA) funds, and Department of Public Welfare 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 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 [Public Law 105-220] required each Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) to establish a one-stop delivery system known in Pennsylvania as the PA CareerLink®. CareerLinks® in the LWIA (PA CareerLink® Lawrence County are located at 102 Margaret Street and PA CareerLink® Mercer County located at 217 West State Street, Sharon, PA 16146) unify numerous training, education, and employment programs into a single, customer-friendly system to serve two customers: job seekers/workers and the business community.

The CareerLink® system will benefit the customer by having multiple agency services and/or referrals available in one location rather than the need to travel to the various partner agencies in the county. Successful responses will assure WCJP that the service provider will become a partner of the PA CareerLink® in Lawrence and/or Mercer Counties during the contract period. All responses to this RFP must coordinate and provide linkage to the following goals of the PA CareerLinks®:

- Universality– Efficient and timely access to a wide variety of job-seeking and employment services provided to any job seeker on the basis of need.
- Integration– A seamless, functional coordination of services through joint development of the system’s vision, goals, service strategies, resource allocation and team-based management.
- Customer Choice– Customers can choose where and how they get information and services. Information and guidance is available to help them make choices, such as performance information on training programs.
- Accountability– Performance-driven, outcome based system that uses data collection, customer feedback and other tools to assess program success.

The successful bidder(s) to this RFP will locate staff and operate all program activities in the PA CareerLink® locations: PA CareerLink® Lawrence County, 101 Margaret Street, New Castle, PA 16101; and/or PA CareerLink® Mercer County, 217 West State Street, Sharon, PA 16146.

Although the initial award will be for a 12-month period, bidders may design a multi-year program with longer-term interventions that provide for continuous performance improvement. Based on successful performance, timeliness of start-up and quality of service, WCJP and the contractor will have the option, depending on future funding, to negotiate continued funding for an additional one year.

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 provide services to eligible individuals who are 16 years of age or older and meet the local, state, and federal WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Older Youth eligibility definitions. The goal is to provide workforce investment activities that increase the employment, retention, earning, and occupational skill attainment of job seeking customers. All activities should be designed to

assist eligible individuals improve their marketability to reenter employment as quickly as possible. Additionally this proposal will improve the flexibility of the publicly funded workforce system.

The contractor will be expected to have staff present at the CareerLink®(s) from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm unless approved otherwise in writing by WJCP. All activities must be open entry/open exit and must be available on a year-round basis.

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 (estimated)
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 programs similar to those outlined in Section 3 of this RFP. Providers must be able to provide substitute instructors to cover sickness and vacations of staff.

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. PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND SCOPE OF WORK

There are three distinct program components to be operated that all potential bidders need to include in their proposals: 1. Literacy/Numeracy – instruction to increase individuals reading and/or math levels to meet levels needed to apply for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). This component also includes General Educational Diploma (GED) instruction that will result in individuals who reach a proficiency level to be able to pass the GED test. 2. Work Readiness Skills – this component includes activities and/or curriculum that prepare individuals to acquire or enhance the knowledge and skills needed to obtain and retain employment. 3) Skills Training component may include off the shelf curriculum purchased by WCJP and/or curricula designed by the contractor and approved in writing by WCJP.

All bidders must be willing to operate all three program components to be considered for approval. 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.

3.1 Literacy/Numeracy Component

Each participant, who is assessed as deficient in basic skills or who need to increase skill levels to pursue higher education, must have the opportunity to take part in activities designed to remedy those deficiencies and/or increase their skill levels.

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 an older youth is enrolled as long as the test(s) were administered within the previous year.

This component must enhance a participant's abilities to read, write, and speak English and to compute and solve mathematical problems to a level of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society. Instructional methodologies employed should include an appropriate mix of class-size training, individual tutoring and self-directed, computer assisted, study.

Participants in such activities are expected to:

3.1.1 Increase test scores in vocabulary, reading comprehension, mathematical computation, mathematical concepts and applications, language mechanics, language expression, and spelling

and

3.1.2 Demonstrate the ability to apply basic mathematical and communications skills correctly in the performance of specific occupation related tasks or in common workplace situations.

Literacy/Numeracy training must include both pre- and post-testing to determine its success. Written progress reports, including all pre- and post-test results, must be maintained on file in the participant's individual case record.

Each participant's progress in attaining learning objectives must be assessed after a minimum of twelve (12) hours of instruction. The minimal average level of gains for participants assessed as basic skills deficient must be at least one grade level as measured by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).

The Literacy/Numeracy Component must also include General Educational Development (GED) instruction. Each participant, who is a school dropout, must have the opportunity to take part in activities leading to the attainment of a GED. This activity must develop or enhance the subject-matter

competencies needed to prepare a participant to successfully and complete the General Equivalency Diploma examination.

Instructional methodologies employed should include an appropriate mix of class-size training, individual tutoring and self-directed, computer assisted, study.

Participants in General Educational Development activities are expected to pass the GED examination and obtain a GED. GED instruction must include both pre- and post-testing to determine its success. Written progress reports, including all pre- and post-test results, must be maintained on file in the participant's individual case record.

Each participant's progress in attaining learning objectives must be assessed after a minimum of twelve (12) hours of instruction. The minimal level of gains for participants who are school dropouts must be an average of three (3) points across sub-tests using the Practice GED Test as a pre-test and either the Practice GED or the GED Test itself as a post-test.

The issuing agency does not believe that there is sufficient local need to include English as a Second Language (ESL) training as a component in this project. The proposal, however, should include a discussion of the strategies that would be employed by the contractor should a participant lack proficiency in the English language.

NOTE: Instructors in the Literacy/Numeracy component must have baccalaureate degrees, PA certification as teachers and Acts 33/34 clearances.

3.2 Work Readiness Skills Component

The Work Readiness component includes activities and/or curriculum that prepare individuals to acquire or enhance the knowledge and skills needed to obtain and retain employment; first activity, orientation and assessment of EARN participants. 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. Activities may include, but are not limited to: Self Assessment - assessment of what the individuals motivating factors are; Development of a job search plan; Development of individual employment plans; Goal setting in relation to job search activities; Communication/interviewing skills; On the job conduct/success; How to stay positive and not give up; Résumé and cover letter development ; Interview preparation; Determining personal wage value; Application preparation and submission – electronic and paper; Emerging job market; Cross walking current skills to growing occupations; Overcoming hurdles to finding and keeping a job; and Dress for success. Work Readiness Skills may also include proctoring of the Worldwide Information Network (WIN®) curriculum and/or ACT sponsored WorkKeys® testing already in operation at each of the PA CareerLink® sites in the LWIA.

3.2.1 The Work Readiness component must also include life skill activities for participants determined to be in need and scheduled by case managers. Life skill activities 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.).

NOTE: Instructors in the Work Readiness component must have baccalaureate degrees, PA certification as teachers and Acts 33/34 clearances.

3.3 Skills Training Component

The overall goal of the skills training component is to connect eligible participants to skill development and other educational activities and then to the local labor market. The skills training programs must demonstrate a high level of innovation and creativity in developing training programs and curricula as well as delivering training and experiential based learning activities. The skills training component may include off the shelf curricula purchased by WCJP and/or curricula designed by the contractor and approved in writing by WCJP. Training must result in a locally or nationally recognized credential.

The proposal must identify all areas of skills training to be provided and include course content, length of training and type of certificate that will be awarded upon completion. The skills training component should be very short term and be considered preparatory material for any training program on the PA's Approved Training Providers list and for participants moving onto WIA funded Individual Training Accounts or higher education programs not on PA's Approved Training Providers list. The skills training component is not intended duplicate any training programs already available within the LWIA.

Examples of skills training include, but are not limited to: customer service training; basic computer skills; computer applications (including but not limited to: word processing, spreadsheets and internet access); etc.

NOTE: Instructors in the Skills Training component must have baccalaureate degrees, PA certification as teachers and Acts 33/34 clearances.

SECTION 4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

It is expected that all WIA and EARN funded programs meet and/or contribute to the achievement of the negotiated performance levels of the WIA Common Performance Measures and the performance levels established by the Bureau of Employment and Training (BETP). Performance measures for Program Year 2010 -2011 have not been issued at the present time. Therefore, the successful bidder will be required to meet with WCJP to negotiate performance goals for the contract period.

SECTION 5 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.

5.1 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.

5.2 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.**

5.3 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 5.1).

5.4 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.

5.5 Conditions Governing the Response

- 5.5.1 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.
- 5.5.2 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.
- 5.5.3 The contents of any proposal submitted become contractual obligations, if a contract is entered into.
- 5.5.4 Proposals that do not follow the format prescribed in Section 5 of this RFP will not be considered.
- 5.5.5 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.
- 5.5.6 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.
- 5.5.7 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.)
- 5.5.8 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.
- 5.5.9 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.
- 5.5.10 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.

- 5.5.11 An official authorized to bind the entity submitting the proposal to its provisions must sign the proposal.
- 5.5.12 The proposal must remain valid for a period of at least ninety (90) calendar days from the date of submission.
- 5.5.13 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.
- 5.5.14 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.
- 5.5.15 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.
- 5.5.16 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.
- 5.5.17 All proposals received become the property of West Central Job Partnership, Inc. and will not be returned.

5.6 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:

- 5.6.1 The subcontractor's legal status, federal tax ID number, and principle business address;
- 5.6.2 The name, phone number, and fax number of a person who is authorized to legally bind the subcontractor to contractual obligations;
- 5.6.3 A complete description of the work the subcontractor will do;
- 5.6.4 A commitment to do the work, if the bidder is selected;
- 5.6.5 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.

5.7 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.

5.8 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.

5.9 Work Location

The successful bidder(s) to this RFP will locate staff and operate all program activities in the PA CareerLink® locations: PA CareerLink® Lawrence County, 101 Margaret Street, New Castle, PA 16101; and/or PA CareerLink® Mercer County, 217 West State Street, Sharon, PA 16146.

5.10 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.

5.11 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:

- 5.11.1 Bidder's Name (legal name of the bidder – person or organization – to whom contract payments would be made.)
- 5.11.2 Bidder's Federal Tax ID Number or Social Security Number
- 5.11.3 Bidder Corporate Address
- 5.11.4 Bidder Remittance Address (if different from the Corporate address)
- 5.11.5 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
- 5.11.6 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 6 PROPOSAL FORMAT & SUBMISSION

6.1 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 April 23, 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 6.2, "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 8.1** 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.

6.2 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 8.2 of this RFP)
- ❑ Vendor Required Information (Section 5.11)

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 RFP.

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 8.3** 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 8.4**. 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 8.5.1** 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 8.5.2**. 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 8.6**.
- 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 8.7**.

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 8.8 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 7. 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.

7.1 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:

- 7.1.1** 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.
- 7.1.2** 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.
- 7.1.3** 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 this RFP.
- 7.1.4** 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.
- 7.1.5** 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.
- 7.1.6** The contractor has a past record of conducting or performing similar activities or services successfully.
- 7.1.7** 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.
- 7.1.8** 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.
- 7.1.9** 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.

7.1.10 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.

7.1.11 The contractor's proposed cost or price for the conduct of the project is reasonable.

7.2 The Selection Process

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

The initial evaluation criteria outlined in **APPENDIX 8.9** 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.

7.2.2 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 8.9**.

7.2.3 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.

7.2.4 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.

7.2.5 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.

7.2.6 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.