

# Solicitation Summary for Employment Services for Dislocated Worker Program and Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program RFP

**Date of Solicitation:** March 1, 2024

**Number of Proposals Received:** 1 (joint proposal from HIRED/DEED)

**Review Team Agencies:** Dakota Scott Workforce Investment Board

**Services Description:** This RFP is issued to solicit a contractor or contractors to provide comprehensive employment and training services authorized under both Title I of the Federal Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (Public Law 105-220) and the State Dislocated Worker Program (MN Statutes 116L.17). Initial awards under this RFP will reflect the estimated amount of Federal and State funding to be received for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. Funds for the years following will be allocated to the Workforce Service Areas (WSA) by the State of Minnesota to the service provider(s) selected through this RFP process. This subsequent allocation of funds is dependent on the availability of Federal and State Adult and Dislocated Worker funds, provider effectiveness, and demonstrated need for services offered.

The Dakota County Workforce Development Board (WDB) issues this Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit providers for services to workers dislocated from employment lay-offs of fewer than 50 individuals from a single workplace as well as to unemployed or underemployed adults who are eligible to receive core, intensive and training services under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act. These services are funded by an allocation formula which apportions federal and state monies to WSA.

Dakota County intends to designate one or more service providers for a period up to five years. Proposals must reflect an ability to provide all services designated under this RFP either through the proposer's organization alone or with the proposer and identified subcontractors.

## **Primary Deliverables:**

This RFP is issued to solicit a contractor or contractors to provide comprehensive employment and training services for three distinct programs with three distinct funding streams:

- WIOA Adult services as required under the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act with an estimated annual funding of \$325,000.
- Federal Dislocated Worker services as required under the Workforce Investment Act with an estimated annual funding of \$450,000.

- State Dislocated Worker services as required under the Minnesota Dislocated Worker Program with an estimated annual funding of \$700,000.

These funding projections are subject to change, consistent with final allocation levels established by the State of Minnesota. Dakota County seeks proposals that include service provision for all three programs. An estimated 500 individuals will be served across all programs depending on funding levels.

Dakota County will enter into a per participant, performance-based contract with each successful proposer. Contract language will include a work statement outlining program deliverables, State and Federal performance standards and WSA performance measures.

### **Solicitation Selection Criteria:**

#### **1. Program Design (25 Points)**

Provide a concise description of the program design. WIOA Adult and WIOA and State Dislocated Worker program design elements must be in conformance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and MN Statutes 116L.17 and should include at a minimum the following services:

- Determination of eligibility
- Assessment of skills, interests, aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including employability skills upgrades and referrals to appropriate employability and soft skills training
- Provision of labor market information
- Provision of information on filing and maintaining Unemployment Insurance claims
- Provision of career counseling
- Direction to appropriate long and short-term training opportunities, entrepreneurial training and assistance with the financial aid process
- Assistance with job placement, referrals, including apprenticeships and other work experience
- Follow-up services up to 1 year.

#### **2. Knowledge of Statutes and Mandated Programs (10 Points)**

Describe proposer's current model of recruitment, outreach, eligibility determination, and case management. This model must reflect the intention of WIOA and its programmatic requirements as well as the state-defined purpose of adult and dislocated worker programs. Show evidence of knowledge of adult and dislocated worker employment and training programs, their legislative requirements as well as best practices.

Under this category, proposals will be rated on evidence of knowledge of WIOA and its provisions for services for adults and dislocated workers and State practices and requirements for dislocated worker programs. Proposers should describe a model for recruitment, outreach, orientation and enrollment, that reflects an efficient cycle time (specify number of weeks) from first contact to first service and that demonstrates understanding of eligibility requirements in all programs.

Participant access to staff should be easy and direct. Components of the case management model must demonstrate mandatory requirements as well as reflect the proposers understanding of best industry practices. Strategies for follow up should harmonize both customer-service and state-mandated considerations.

**3. Service Delivery Experience (10 Points)**

Describe history of providing WIOA adult and dislocated worker services to a broad range of individuals in multiple employment and training programs for program participants. Demonstrate history of achieving or exceeding negotiated outcomes, mindfulness of customer satisfaction issues and providing culturally appropriate services. Describe history of providing services to Dakota County residents and/or connections with employers and community-based organizations in Dakota County. Describe innovative practices that have shown or can be expected to show positive outcomes for adult and dislocated worker clients.

Under this category, proposals will be rated according to their organization's current and proposed service delivery model and history of representing and providing culturally appropriate services adult and dislocated worker services to a broad range of people and innovation. Proposers should discuss how the current model provides culturally appropriate services and if they would modify or make any changes to their current model. Proposers should also demonstrate a history of offering these programs to participants over the course of at least 3 years. Evidence of meeting and exceeding performance standards is sought.

**4. Strategies for Retraining (10 Points)**

Proposers must also describe a history of assisting participants with appropriate training opportunities as a part of achieving employment goals. How will eligibility for training be determined? How broad is the proposer's knowledge of training opportunities and what strategies are in place to maintain current knowledge of such opportunities? How are training expenditures determined?

**5. Organizational Capacity (10 Points)**

Proposers should demonstrate capacity to operate adult and dislocated worker programs for a minimum of 200 individuals depending on funding levels. How are staff trained? How are problems solved? What internal mechanism will the organization employ for coping with change, expanding and contracting capacity? What mechanism will provide for internal evaluation of program effectiveness? What service provision or case management elements most directly influence program outcomes?

In this category, proposals will be rated according to the demonstrated ability to manage adult and dislocated worker programs. It is in the best interest of participants served in these programs in Dakota County to receive services in the CareerForce locations; the ability and willingness to locate staff and services in these CareerForce locations is one key to a successful proposal.

Additionally, the proposer must show a strategy for developing staff as well as supporting and managing change. Adapting to fluctuations in caseload is essential for the successful proposer as are staff qualifications and experience.

#### **6. Program Management and Tracking (10 Points)**

Proposals will also be evaluated on the demonstrated capacity for internal tracking of participant activity, organizational performance and spending. How will proposer track participant progress, service outcomes, and expenditures (including funds obligated)? Proposers should demonstrate a mechanism for broad internal program evaluation. Can the proposer identify specific program strategies that yield favorable outcomes for participants? What program components demonstrate the proposer's commitment to continuous improvement? Customer satisfaction? Dakota County also seeks strategies for effectively addressing customer complaints.

#### **7. Leveraged Resources (10 Points)**

Proposer should demonstrate ability to leverage additional funds and in-kind services for adult and dislocated worker programs using outside partnerships and/or internal economies of scale. Describe proposer's history of collaboration with other partners or across agency lines and the accrued benefits to program participants. How have connections with outside organizations and/or with proposer's own larger organization been utilized to broaden the scale of your service delivery? What resources, both monetary and in-kind, can proposer bring to these programs in Dakota County? Does proposer have connections to employers and community-based organizations in Dakota County?

Proposer should also demonstrate ability and willingness to locate in Dakota County's two CareerForce locations and to participate in infrastructure funding agreements.

In this category, proposals will be rated according to their demonstrated ability and willingness to bring resources to adult and dislocated worker programs in Dakota County. Value can be added to these programs both through a strategic use of partnerships with outside organizations and through economies of scale within a proposer's own organization. Proposers will total both monetary and in-kind resources that can be leveraged. A budget estimator sheet is attached.

#### **8. Additional Items (15 points)**

1. An organizational chart depicting reporting structure, staff roles, and the larger organization beyond the scope of adult and dislocated worker programs.
2. Copies of fiscal and program tracking tools for one month.
3. Job descriptions of staff members who will deliver services under the programs listed in this RFP.
4. One year of performance data.
5. A copy of your *current* insurance certificate.

**Evaluation Results:**

After a thorough review, the review panel recommended to award contracts with: HIRED and DEED. These providers are the current contracted providers.

**Rationale of Recommended Vendor:**

HIRED and DEED submitted a joint proposal which was the only proposal received and met all of the requirements from the evaluation criteria. HIRED and DEED have been long-time contracted vendors for these services.