

Section XVI. AMERICAN JOB CENTER OPERATOR SELECTION PROCESS

Union County Workforce Development Board is committed to supporting “Locally Driven, High Quality” American Job Centers that meet local needs and assist individuals in obtaining new skills and employment WIOA legislation.

The attempt to effectively and efficiently implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, and to ensure high-quality, locally driven American Job Centers, “requires the local board, with the agreement of the chief elected official, designate or certify one-stop operators and to terminate for cause the eligibility of such operators.” The ultimate purpose of this transparent and competitive process is to ensure the provision of quality services at the American Job Center level.

It is the intent of the Union County WDB to solicit professional and highly qualified organizations with the expertise and capacity to manage the day-to-day operations of multiple American Job Centers and to design, administer and deliver workforce development services to job-seeking customers, as well as become an effective training and employment resource to the County and region. The Board will ensure that the process for competitive selection of the American Job Center Operator is open and transparent, and made available to all eligible entities.

The Local Workforce Development Board has the responsibility to oversee the American Job Center Operator and counseling staff manage triage, intake, and counseling for the systematic referrals of customers to the most appropriate programs offered by American Job Center partners in order to achieve more positive and prompt employment outcomes.

State-Prescribed Criteria

The Board will move forward in full compliance with the legislative mandate and State directives. The state has defined very specific process requirements regarding the competitive selection, which must:

- Be completed by June 1, 2017, with implementation of the role of the American Job Center Operator beginning no later than July 1, 2017
- Follow all procurement rules, federal, state and local
- Include all applicable rules regarding access and service provision
- Ensure all necessary approvals are in place prior to procurement
- Observe all firewalls and conflict of interest policies
- Not confuse operators' roles with local board functions.

Firewalls – Conflict of Interest

Union County has, currently in place, Firewall, and Conflict of Interest policies that follow all applicable federal, state and local procurement requirements. These policies will be closely adhered to in the selection of service providers and One-Stop Operators.

We have, and will continue to comply with Federal, State and Local requirements including:

- United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, Audit Requirements for Federal Awards 200.317-200.326 (Procurement Procedures) which establishes principles and standards for determining costs of all federal awards carried out by state and local governments.
- Section 107(g)(1)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates that local Workforce Development Boards shall not provide training services to customers. This requirement states “A local board acting as a direct provider of services is not optimal, as the local board is designed to oversee the one-stop system and its services, not to provide them.” Boards must competitively procure these training services in compliance with all state and federal regulations.
- Requirements for the competitive procurement of one-stop operators are addressed in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) Section (a)-(e). That section requires that one-stop operator be selected through a competitive process. The rule further clarifies that there must be firewalls in place to ensure that the operator is not conducting oversight of itself as a service provider.

Eligible Operators

The Board will consider applicants in accordance with the legislative definition of entities eligible for serving as a American Job Center Operator, namely a list that includes any of the following:

- Institution of higher education
- An employment service State agency established under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), on behalf of the local office of the agency
- A community-based organization, nonprofit organization, or intermediary, private for-profit entity
- A government agency
- Another interested organization or entity, which may include a local chamber of commerce or other business organization or a labor organization.

Bid Specifications

At a minimum, the request for bids will include the following:

- Listing of entities that may operate a One-Stop
- The question of multiple operators or managing multiple sites
- Types of entities that may be a One-Stop Operator
- Frequency of selection
- The requirement for a competitive process
- The requirement to follow applicable federal (state and local) procurement law.

Scope of Solicitation

The Workforce Development Board, through long, contemplative discussion, adopted the scope of the solicitation for the Union County American Job Center Operator. It was agreed that the County would require that the selected entity will:

- Operate full-service centers in Elizabeth, NJ, and Plainfield, NJ.
 - Fully align all centers with the Union County Workforce Development Board strategic plan (Section 1.4) providing concerted focus on the critical and emerging industries in the region.
 - Deliver quality service to all job seekers regardless of age and all companies regardless of size or industry type, using data as well as customer input to drive improvement and quality service.
 - Incorporate WIOA-mandated and other community partners in the American Job Center operation through integrated staff management.
 - Maintain the American Job Center delivery system to meet the needs of the local areas: labor market data, information sharing, partner and customer surveying, and business engagement coordination.
 - Assure consistency of services including, but not limited to, career services, training, and workshops and continuously improve the American Job Center system.
 - Provide monthly reports to the UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD on activities for both job seekers and businesses at the service centers.
 - Coordinate the implementation of all Memoranda of Understanding approved by the UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD.
 - Expand partnerships and increase integrated service delivery.
 - Develop strategies to improve cross partner performance.
 - Arrange and offer cross-partner performance.
 - Report to Board, stakeholders, and partners on system activities, regularly and as is deemed applicable.
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- Perform other duties as assigned by the UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD.

In an attempt to maintain clear, distinct separation for proper oversight and avoidance

of any conflict, the specifications detailed the following stipulation:

An American Job Center Operator may not perform the following functions:

- Convene system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan, or prepare and submit local plans.
- Be responsible for oversight of its own operation.
- Manage or significantly participate in the competitive selection process for an AMERICAN JOB CENTER OPERATOR.
- Select or terminate AMERICAN JOB CENTER OPERATOR, career services, or youth providers.
- Negotiate local performance accountability measures.
- Develop and submit a budget for activities of the local Workforce Development Board in the local area.

Award Criteria

The Local Board will define the criteria being considered for selection. Again, in compliance with the State guidelines, selection criteria may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Leadership. Considerations may include:
 - Existence of a mission statement
 - Clear/written description of the system
 - Qualified/trained leadership
 - Qualified staff
 - Accessibility
 - Communications
- Strategic Planning
 - Data-based decision-making
 - Evidence-based service use
 - Targeting of the service population
 - Targeting of employment
 - Coordination of employment
 - Utilization of data
- Process Management
 - Outreach processes
 - Certification processes
 - Referral processes between partners
 - Coordination of job development
 - Joint employer marketing

Award Criteria Detail

Criteria	Points
<p>A. Organization Background, Qualifications, Performance History (Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3,3.4)</p> <p>Organizational stability, demonstrated experience and quality service delivery – whether bidder adequately addressed all the response items and appears to be a solid organization and extent to which bidder demonstrated evidence of ability to perform the functions described in its project plan. Qualifications and Staffing – completeness of response to the items in the instructions, quality of response, the strength of experience, and demonstrated achievements/results.</p>	20
<p>B. Plan of Service (Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)</p> <p>Adequacy of response to all items in the instructions, strength of approach and processes in streamlining operations, eliminating overlap and duplication of services and continuous improvement of the American Job Center system. An understanding of the commitment to an integrated service delivery model that embraces the team-based case management approach and an understanding of the importance of employer relations and business services.</p>	35
<p>C. Staffing Plan and Organizational Chart (Section 5.0)</p> <p>Qualifications and Staffing – completeness of response to the items in the instructions, quality of response, the strength of experience, and demonstrated achievements/results.</p>	15
<p>D. Partnerships and Coordination (Sections 6.0)</p> <p>Understanding of and commitment to an integrated service delivery and team-based case management model in the American Job Centers network and showing an effective working relationship with the Board, partner organizations, businesses, and the community. Ability to leverage resources with other partners resulting in innovative service approaches will be considered.</p>	10
<p>E. Financial Management and Budget (Sections 7.0, 7.1)</p> <p>Reasonableness of pricing consistent with the plan of service proposed and the qualifications of the bidder.</p>	10
<p>F. Presentation</p> <p>Responders success in effectively describing the overall approach and successfully answering reviewers' follow-up questions.</p>	10
<p style="text-align: right;">TOTAL</p>	100

Contract Responsibilities and Restrictions

In preparation for the Request for Proposals, the Board will determine the process by which one or more organizations will be selected as the Contractor to deliver all activities and services described in the RFP and how the review of applications will be conducted. The Board will also establish parameters regarding sub-contracting. The process will be open and transparent and review conducted solely on the basis of the published review criteria.

Services to Business Customers

Services to Business Customers shall be delivered through the efforts of the Workforce Innovation Business Center and the Business Service Specialists, as previously outlined in Section IV, Sub-Sections A and C.

Next Steps

The Board will develop a specific action plan including a specific timeline that will assure the establishment of a competitively selected American Job Center Operator(s) on July 1, 2017.

The state has required that the following documents be submitted by each local Workforce Investment Area seeking American Job Center Certification. As such, these may be considered gateways to certification consideration:

- A completed cover document/letter of transmittal requesting State of New Jersey American Job Center certification
- Current/Full Workforce Development Board Certification
- Verification of meeting disability/accessibility standards
- Verification of meeting grievance/complaint/EO standards
- Local Memorandum of Understanding between the Workforce Board and its local American Job Center partners
- A completed Quality Benchmarking Tool
- Completed Minimum Standard of Service Delivery Checklist.

The timeline presented in the table below will serve as a working document and will be updated as necessary, keeping July 1, 2017, as the start date for the selected American Job Center Operator.

	J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 7	F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 7	M A R C H 2 0 1 7	A P R I L 2 0 1 7	M A Y 2 0 1 7	J U N E 2 0 1 7	J U L Y 1 , 2 0 1 7
Projected Timeline							
Convene WDB Executive Committee to discuss RFP	■						
Reinforce proper firewalls concerning conflicts of interest as per Federal & State guidelines	■						
Research Best Practices	■	■					
Revisit Local Board Priorities	■	■					
Define Selection Criteria		■					
Finalize RFP Specifications			■				
Release RFP - establish 45 days due date			■				
Request for Proposals Due				■			
Host Applicant Presentations					■		
Review Proposals					■		
Complete Selection/Negotiation Process					■		
Award Contract					■		
Launch Newly Engaged Operation / Start Date						■	■

Specific Timeline - Process

Release of Request for Proposal	April 4, 2017
Technical Assistance Conference	April 11, 2017
Deadline for Receipt of Questions	May 3, 2017
Issuance of Answers to Questions	May 5, 2017
Request for Proposal Due Date	May 9, 2017
Presentations by top 3 Respondents	May 17, 2017
Conditional Award / Denial Letters	May 24, 2017