



Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board

## **Request for Proposals for a Comprehensive Strategic Plan Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

**Issue Date: November 8, 2019**

**Response Deadline: December 2, 2019, 12:00 PM EST**

**Email to [WorkforceRFP@sedev.org](mailto:WorkforceRFP@sedev.org)**

**Funding Period: December 16, 2019 – March 2, 2020**

### **Part I: Introduction**

The Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board is seeking proposals from qualified firms or individuals to develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan. The plan development will be conducted by an agency selected through standard procurement process in compliance with and under the guidance of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and any guidance and/or regulations thereto and according to provisions of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance.

The following ten (10) counties in Tennessee comprise the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Area: Bledsoe, Bradley, Grundy, Hamilton, McMinn, Marion, Meigs, Polk, Rhea, and Sequatchie Counties.

### **Part II: Background**

The quality of the region's workforce is a primary driver of economic development and the region's overall economic health. Local workforce development areas that most effectively manage their talent are likely to be more competitive and will attract the quality of jobs people need to support themselves and their families. The local board is tasked with oversight of the American Job Center system authorized under WIOA which helps job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and matches employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. In particular, WIOA programs seek to provide a variety of services and supports to individuals with barriers to employment, including but not limited to, individuals with disabilities and justice-involved individuals.

WIOA supports regional cooperation and shared workforce planning and requires a four-year, workforce plan that helps facilitate a more comprehensive, strategic, streamlined and effective regional workforce development system. With the contract agent's procured assistance, the local

board, in partnership with the chief elected official for the southeast Tennessee local area, will develop and submit the local plan to the Governor that meets WIOA requirements.

### **Part III: Project Scope**

The local workforce development board is seeking proposals from individuals or businesses experienced in strategic planning to support the development of a comprehensive workforce strategic plan for the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Area. The contract agent will assist in the development of the local workforce plan that complies with the requirements of WIOA and advances the vision of the local board to most effectively support regional workers, job seekers, and business and industry. The contract agent will ensure local alignment with the regional and state plans and processes.

The contract agent will provide facilitation, planning, and technical support to develop a local strategic planning process and to assist board staff in completing a four-year plan that documents the plan process, shared vision, values, goals, tactics, outcomes, and accountability. Beyond complying with the technical requirements of WIOA, the local board is committed to producing a plan that has broad support, actionable goals and improves outcomes for regional workers, job seekers and employers. The plan must include robust stakeholder/community input, consideration of local area labor market, program and related data, and build upon the integration efforts undertaken thus far with the local area's public American Job Center system, youth development and regional industry sector efforts.

### **Part IV: Primary Services/Activities**

#### **Facilitate Three Industry and Workforce Learning Sessions in the Local Area**

The contract agent will schedule and hold three Industry and Workforce Learning Sessions for the Sequatchie Valley area, greater Chattanooga, and greater McMinn County/North and will help develop meeting agenda and facilitate discussion among meeting participants to obtain input, resolve differences and keep the process moving forward.

In addition to discussing workforce, training and educational challenges, the contract agent will also address recovery/substance abuse and reentry for justice-involved individuals. Business and industry partners, secondary and postsecondary educators, workforce and economic development, community- and faith-based organizations, Chambers of Commerce, County Mayors, and other stakeholders and partners are encouraged to attend the meetings suitable to workforce needs.

The learning sessions must also focus on industry partners' feedback regarding secondary and postsecondary career pathways, workers soft skills, work ethic, and job skills, and education and training effectiveness leading to work-ready job seekers. The learning sessions must be completed by **February 28, 2020**.

#### **Community/Stakeholder Engagement**

The contract agent will help design a multifaceted approach to ensure broad, authentic stakeholder engagement in the development of the plan. The engagement strategy should deploy a variety of ways to encourage and receive stakeholder input, including in-person interviews, surveys, focus groups, social media, etc.

### **Identify Specific Career Pathways to Meet Business and Industry Needs**

Of the 16 Career Clusters, identify the industry-driven, in-demand career pathways in order to create a much-needed workforce pipeline to meet the business and industry workforce needs.

### **Strategic Plan Development**

The contract agent will obtain best and evidence-based practices, local primary and secondary data, and community engagement and will work with board staff and board members to develop a plan document. The contract agent will document the process and results and submit a completed plan to the local workforce board for adoption. The projected due date for the Comprehensive Strategic Plan is early spring 2020. The contract agent is expected to provide board staff technical assistance in the completion of the local and regional plans.

### **Data Collection and Analyses**

The data collection and analyses for the plan must include a comprehensive assessment of the southeast Tennessee's businesses and industries, the workforce, education and economic development communities and other local area partners and stakeholders which will promote development of a data-driven and innovative approach to regional strategic workforce planning.

Provide local area data and data analyses of:

- Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
- Employment needs (job seekers' knowledge and skills) of employers in existing and emerging in-demand sectors and occupations;
- A comprehensive analysis of the local area's workforce including employment and unemployment, labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment;
- Assess the Economic Diversity in the 10-county Local Workforce Development Area; determine the economic vitality, resilience, and sustainability as reflected in the economic diversity of the local area. Use comparisons to similar economic regions to highlight strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for improvement.
- An analysis of workforce development activities including education and training which must include strengths and weaknesses of the workforce and capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce including individuals with barriers to employment and the employment needs of employers;
- Business and industry feedback regarding workforce development activities including education and training to determine if training providers (secondary and postsecondary) are creating the appropriately skilled, trained, work-ready workers and meeting the workforce needs of business and industry.

Information regarding the following:

- How the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:
  - Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;
  - Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and
  - Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable;
- Identify the strategies and services that will be used in the local area:
  - To facilitate engagement of employers in the workforce development programs including small employers and in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
  - To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;
  - To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development;
  - To strengthen linkages between the One-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs;
  - That may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers.

The contract agent will also:

- Assess the economic impact of the opioid crisis and substance abuse in the local area;
- Obtain data indicating the extent of ex-offenders who are not participating in the workforce; determine the 10-county recidivism rate.
- Identify the most effective (decreased recidivism) evidence-based reentry program for ex-offenders including justice-involved individuals in Community Corrections; and
- Determine or estimate the economic impact if the *Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed* (ALICE) area residents were paid wages to remove them from the ALICE list (e.g. paid livable wages to support emergency funds and retirement goals).

The research should also contribute to the development of a framework for sustainability and, in particular, steer southeast Tennessee toward economic growth and prosperity for its citizens.

### **Follow-up**

As necessary, the contract agent will work with the local board staff to develop reports that discuss plan progress, achievements, and/or updates based on changes in the regional economy or priorities.

All proposals must contain the following elements to be considered by the Evaluation Committee which is appointed by the local board:

1. Executive summary identifying the independent contractor or agency with contact information, indication of legal capacity to do business in the state of Tennessee, and signed by a staff person authorized to represent the organization. Describe your experience conducting similar work. Include three (3) client references. (**Maximum 20 points – not more than 1 page**)
2. Proposal describing your strategy and methods for designing, facilitating and completing the planning process and products. (**Maximum 45 points – not more than 6 pages**)
3. Individual resume(s) or summary of qualifications for the key person or persons to be assigned to this project, addressing their abilities to perform the required work. (**Maximum 15 points – not more than 1 page**)
4. Bid amount and budget, including justification of all necessary costs, including hours of effort, rates, disbursements, overhead and proposed reimbursement schedule (**Maximum 20 points – not more than 1 page**)

**Total possible points: 100**

The American Job Center system and local area board cannot enter into contract negotiations with an organization that is not legally established to conduct business within the state of Tennessee or is debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.

#### **Part VI: Proposal Review Process**

Proposals will be evaluated by the Committee based on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the organization demonstrates prior experience and expertise performing similar strategic planning work.
- The effectiveness of the project design and overall approach.
- The timeline for accomplishing the plan and primary services.
- Reasonableness of proposed costs.

During the evaluation process, the Evaluation Committee may, at its discretion, request any or all respondents to make oral presentations.

#### **Part VII: Proposal Submission**

Proposals should be submitted as follows:

- **Format:** Proposals should be no more than ten (10) pages
- **Electronic Submission:** Proposals are to be emailed to [WorkforceRFP@sedev.org](mailto:WorkforceRFP@sedev.org) with “Workforce Comprehensive Strategic Plan” in the subject line. The email with the

proposal attached must be received **no later than noon, 12:00 PM EST, Monday, March 2, 2019.** The Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board staff will send an email reply confirmation to the sender acknowledging receipt.

It is the respondent's responsibility to ensure the submission was received. If an email from the local area board staff has not been received acknowledging the receipt of the proposal, it is the respondent's responsibility to follow-up with another email or telephone call before noon, 12:00 PM EST, March 2, 2019. **Late proposals will not be considered.**

## **Part VIII: Administrative Detail**

### **Inquiries**

All questions related to this RFP are to be submitted electronically via email with the subject "Workforce Comprehensive Strategic Plan RFP Inquiry" and sent to: [WorkforceRFP@sedev.org](mailto:WorkforceRFP@sedev.org). Questions will be responded to during the bidders' teleconference which is noted on the RFP Timeline (see Attachment I).

Questions received after the bidders' teleconference on November 27, 2019 will not be answered.

### **Withdrawal**

A submitted RFP response may be withdrawn at any time. A written request to withdraw the response must be submitted electronically to: [WorkforceRFP@sedev.org](mailto:WorkforceRFP@sedev.org).

### **Appeals**

The following process has been established to address appeals:

- The appeal must be due to what the respondent considers a flaw in the Evaluation Committee's funding recommendation process.
- The appeal must be submitted in writing within five business days of the award notification. Appeals must be sent to: [WorkforceRFP@sedev.org](mailto:WorkforceRFP@sedev.org). All appeals are public information.
- The organization/individual filing the appeal must specify the basis of the appeal and provide an alternative the appellant would find acceptable. Proposal rating scores may not be appealed. The mere fact that a proposal was not recommended for funding is also not open to an appeal, nor is a complaint about the amount of funding granted. The appeal must be a violation of the process established for the solicitation.

During any part of the review or consideration, the appellant may be asked to clarify or amplify statements or to provide proof of claims or other statements. Any such requests must be fully responded to within the time designated by the local board staff. In the event and appellant fails to respond, the appeal will be dismissed, and no further appeal will be accepted.

The Evaluation Committee will review the appeal and issue a written response that is intended as a complete and final answer to the appeal.

### **Additional Provisions and Disclaimers**

- The local board reserves the right to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received.
- This RFP does not commit the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board and its fiscal agent, the Southeast Tennessee Development District, to award a contract.
- The local board may accept any item or group of items of any offer, unless the respondent qualified its offer by specific limitations.
- The local board reserves the right to request additional data or oral discussion or documentation in support of written offers.
- No costs will be paid to cover the expense(s) of preparing a proposal.
- All data, material, and documentation originated and prepared by the bidder pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board and its board staff and be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Applicants are advised that most documents in the possession of the local board are considered public records and subject to disclosure under the public records law.
- Formal notification to award a contract and the actual execution of a contract are subject to the following: Receipt of anticipated funding, results of negotiations between selected respondent(s) and board staff, and continued availability of funds.
- Proposals submitted for funding consideration must be consistent with – and if funded, operated according to – relevant federal legislation, all applicable federal regulations, state of Tennessee policies, and the local board’s policies and procedures.
- The local board may decide not to fund part or all of a proposal even though it is found to be in the competitive range if, in board staff opinion, the services proposed are not needed, or the costs are higher than staff finds reasonable in relation to the overall funds available, or if past management concerns lead staff to believe that the bidder has undertaken more services than it can successfully provide.

### **Attachments**

Attachments I – V, which include the Project Timeline, Proposing Entity Information Form, Budget Form, Confidentiality Form, and References, can be found in the following pages 8 – 12.

This project is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee  
Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program.

Auxiliary aids & services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

**Attachment I  
Project Timeline**

<b>RFP Release</b>	<b>November 8, 2019</b>
<b>Bidders' Questions submitted via email</b> <a href="mailto:WorkforceRFP@sedev.org">WorkforceRFP@sedev.org</a>	<b>November 12-14, 2019</b>
<b>Bidders' Conference (not required)</b>	<b>November 18, 2019</b>
<b>Proposal Deadline</b>	<b>12:00 PM EST, December 2, 2019</b>
<b>Review Committee Approval</b>	<b>Week of December 2, 2019</b>
<b>Local Workforce Development Board Approval</b>	<b>December 10, 2019</b>
<b>Anticipated Start Date</b>	<b>December 16, 2019</b>
<b>Contract Agent's Plan Product Due Date</b>	<b>March 2, 2020</b>
<b>Project End Date</b>	<b>June 30, 2020*</b>

\*The 4-Year Strategic Local Plan must be submitted to the State Workforce Development Board on July 1, 2020.



**Attachment II  
Proposing Entity Information Form**

**Legal Name of Applicant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Headquarters Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Years in Business:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FEIN#:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DUNS#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Organization (check all that apply):**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education                | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Service State Agency (Wagner-Peyser) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community-Based                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit Organization                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Private For-profit    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government Agency               | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamber of Commerce                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labor Organization<br>(Explain) | <input type="checkbox"/> One-Stop Partner                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                 |

**Funding Amount Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address & Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signatory Authority Name and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signatory Authority Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

**Attachment III**  
**BUDGET FORM – Line Item Cost Reimbursement Option**

<b>Funds Available</b>	<b>Description of Services</b>		<b>000.00</b>
<b>Item of Expenditure</b>		<b>Request Per Service</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Salaries</b>			
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>			
<b>Travel</b>			
<b>Supplies</b>			
<b>Program Indirect</b>			
<b>Direct Admin (cannot exceed 10%)</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Narrative:** Please attach a narrative and/or chart in explanation of each line item in detail to justify cost. Examples of explanations include job titles, wage rate, hours worked/charged to grant, types of benefits and rates, travel, lodging, estimated mileage/visits to locations, office and other supplies, and agency program operation or indirect cost. The maximum allowable for direct administrative costs is 10%.

If an agency is requesting reimbursement for program indirect cost, an approved indirect rate proposal from the cognizant agency must be included with the proposal. Program indirect cost will be a part of the competitive bid and subject to negotiation.

**Attachment IV**  
**CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM**

By submitting a proposal, the authorized signatory authority of the bidding entity certifies to his/her knowledge and belief that there is no conflict of interest (real or apparent) inherent in the bid or in delivering the scope of work if the Southeast Tennessee Local Workforce Development Board awards a contract. A conflict of interest would arise if any individual involved in the preparation of this proposal and delivery of services has a financial or other interest or would be likely to gain financially or personally from the award of a contract. The same would hold true for any member of the individual's family, partner, or an organization employing or about to employ any of the above as a direct result of the successful award of a contract under the RFP. The local board reserves the right to disqualify a bidding entity should a conflict of interest be discovered during the solicitation process.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signatory Authority Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Attachment V References**

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/803/text>

### **WIOA Final Regulations**

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/19/2016-15975/workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act>

### **U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration**

[www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov)

### **DOL WIOA Overview and other WIOA related information**

<https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm>