



Workforce
Opportunity
Council, Inc.

Leveraging Resources for New Hampshire's Future

Request for Proposals

Seeking qualified vendor to perform an evaluation of system changes accomplished through the implementation of the Youth Transition Alignment Grant, a demonstration grant awarded to New Hampshire by the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor.

64 Old Suncook Road, Concord, NH 03301 • (603) 228-9500 • Fax (603) 228-8557

The Workforce Opportunity Council, Inc. is a sponsor of the NH WORKS system, a proud member of America's Workforce Network, and an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD: Relay NH: 711

Request for Proposals

Purpose/Background:

The Workforce Opportunity Council (Council) is the State Workforce Investment Board (WIB) under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). New Hampshire is a single service-delivery state, meaning, that the Council is the only WIB, and no local or regional Boards exist under WIA.

The Council is currently seeking proposals from all qualified individuals or organizations to provide specific evaluation services regarding the system changes accomplished through the implementation of the Youth Alignment Transition Grant in the State of New Hampshire. This is a five-year demonstration grant funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), U.S. Department of Labor. New Hampshire is currently beginning its third year of grant implementation. Several states were awarded grants, including, among others, Vermont, Colorado, Iowa, and Alaska. As would be expected, all states involved in this demonstration project have taken a slightly different approach in implementation.

New Hampshire has implemented the grant in the following manner:

1. The State Advisory/Oversight Committee is made up of individuals from a number of organizations. All are active stakeholders in providing or coordinating services to youth. The organizational affiliation of the Committee includes the Alliance for Community Supports, Institute on disability/UNH, National Alliance for Mentally Ill-NH, Division of Behavioral Health-HHS, Vocational Rehabilitation, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action Program, Postsecondary Education Commission, Division of Children, Youth and Families, Community Alliance Reform (CARE-NH), Community Support Network, Department of Education, Division of Juvenile Justice, NH ATECH Services, Workforce Opportunity Council, Developmental Disabilities Council, NH Special Education Administrators Association, NH Parent Information Center, Business & Industry Association, and NH Disabilities Rights Center.
2. The Workforce Opportunity Council, Inc. (Council) serves as the grantee and official liaison to ODEP. The Council is responsible for the overall performance of the grant and, as such, acts in an oversight role to the entire process. The Council also submits the quarterly financial and performance reports to ODEP.
3. The Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. (DDC), under contract to the Workforce Opportunity Council, serves as the Project Director of the grant. DDC is responsible for the daily management of the grant, and oversight of the four pilot projects currently being conducted in the state. DDC submits progress reports to the Council, and works with the Council on resolving any issues of concern.
4. Four pilot projects (local intermediaries) complete the grant implementation within New Hampshire. The pilot sites were chosen through an RFP process and all were essentially prepared to begin their responsibilities by the end of December 2004. While not specifically serving youth themselves, the local intermediaries are tasked with connecting schools and other youth-serving institutions with post-secondary institutions, workplaces, and other available federal, state, and community resources. The goal is to help build a system that better meets the needs of all interested stakeholders. The intermediaries will

provide necessary information and training in their communities in areas such as benefits planning, universal access, reasonable accommodation, mental health, housing, transportation, health maintenance (including Medicare and Medicaid), and other self-sufficiency issues. In addition, they will assist in the assessment/evaluation of the impact their efforts have on the system. The local intermediaries are also responsible for tracking the specific progress and/or performance of individuals “touched” by the grant’s activities. This is done through direct password-controlled access to a case management & reporting system managed by the Workforce Opportunity Council.

The pilot projects are:

- a. Strafford Learning Center (Somersworth)
- b. Monadnock Developmental Services (Keene)
- c. North Country Education Services Agency (Gorham)
- d. School Administrative Unit (SAU) # 35 (Littleton)

The grant is just beginning the third year of operation. The first two years involved community resource mapping at both the state and local (pilot sites) level, as well as significant organizational/capacity development at the local intermediary level, and outreach to the community stakeholders. Development of a State Plan was also the major focus of the grant implementation process.

Contingent upon continued funding by ODEP, the grant is scheduled to end in September 2008. System Evaluation will be based on the goals identified in the State Plan, developed as a part of this grant, as well as the objectives outlined by ODEP in the original Notice of Award. The State Plan, which is currently in draft form, has been posted on the NH Works website under “Breaking News” (www.nhworks.org). The draft State Plan should allow the bidder to gain a wider understanding of the grant’s expectations.

The ODEP Notice of Award lists the following as objectives of the grant:

“The purpose of the Innovative State Alignment Grants for Improving Transition Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities through the Use of Intermediaries grant initiative is to:

1. *Help states conduct resource mapping to assess youth service delivery infrastructures in light of evidence-based transition operating principles, identifying available assets and resources within the states’ youth service delivery infrastructure and evaluating whether and/or to what extent that system is currently servicing youth with disabilities consistent with the evidence-based operative principles.*
2. *Develop, implement, and evaluate a cross-agency multi-year state plan to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities through blending and/or braiding of federal, state, and community resources and the use of local intermediary organizations, thereby utilizing mechanisms that pool dollars from multiple sources and make them in some ways indistinguishable or utilize funding streams in tact but, when used in common, produce greater strength, efficiency, and/or effectiveness.*
3. *Conduct local pilot demonstrations to determine how, through community partnerships, intermediary organizations can best be used to ensure that youth with disabilities obtain transition services consistent with evidence-based transition operating principles, and the*

impact of such intermediaries on improving transition outcomes for youth with disabilities; and

4. *Demonstrate, through leveraging federal, state, and local public sector resources, concrete evidence of the likelihood of sustainability of grant objectives within the state.*”

As can be seen from above, the true underlying goal is to blend and braid resources from a variety of sources to better focus on meeting the needs of the state’s youth population, and in particular those youth with disabilities. ODEP noted in their 2003 White Paper, that “education and workforce development organizations provide services within a variety of settings, including a complex maze of 1) differing institutional missions, each with distinctive funding parameters and fiscal incentives; 2) multiple funding streams with substantial variations in the expected outcomes; 3) traditions, and 4) capacities of the institutions and staff. Ultimately, however, all organizations within the workforce development system have in common the customers of their services: youth and adults seeking employment, and employers seeking capable workers. A substantial body of information documents what each group needs. With careful study and action, this information can direct efforts in the workforce development field toward organizing and facilitating better linkages between these two customer groups.”

Specifically for youth, a body of knowledge has been developed that demonstrates that all youth, and particularly youth with disabilities, are better able to become self-sustaining if they are provided certain services and supports. These services and supports are now commonly referred to as “Guideposts for Success”, and the following table provides more specific information on each element.

Guideposts for Success

General Needs	Specific Needs
Access to Participation in High Quality Standards-Based Education Regardless of Setting	<p><i>In order to perform at optimal levels in education, all youth need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ academic and career-technical education offerings based on state and industry standards; ▪ access to a varied and balanced set of learning strategies appropriate for the individual. <p><i>Youth with disabilities need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ individual transition plans that drive instruction and academic support; ▪ specific and individual learning accommodations.
Preparatory Experiences	<p><i>In order to make informed choices about careers, all youth need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ career assessment including, but not limited to, interest inventories, and formal and informal vocational assessments; ▪ information about career opportunities that provide a living wage, including information about education, entry requirements, and income potential; ▪ training in job-seeking skills; ▪ structured exposure to postsecondary education and other lifelong learning opportunities. <p><i>Youth with disabilities need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information about the relationships between appropriate benefits planning and career choices; ▪ identification of and access to disability-related support and

General Needs	Specific Needs
	<p>accommodations needed for the workplace and community living;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ instruction and guidance about communicating disability-related support and accommodation needs to prospective employers and service providers.
Work-based Experiences	<p><i>In order to attain career goals, all youth need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ opportunities to engage in a range of work-based exploration activities such as site visits and job shadowing; ▪ multiple on-the-job training experiences, including community service (paid or unpaid) that is specifically linked to the content of a program of study. <p><i>Youth with disabilities need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ instruction and guidance about requesting, locating, and securing appropriate supports and accommodation needed at the workplace.
Youth Development and Youth Leadership Opportunities	<p><i>All youth need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mentoring activities designed to establish strong relationships with adults through formal and informal settings and also peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities; ▪ exposure to role models in a variety of contexts; ▪ training in skills such as self-advocacy and conflict resolution; ▪ exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities, including community service; ▪ opportunities to exercise leadership. <p><i>Youth with disabilities need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ exposure to mentors and role models including persons with and without disabilities; ▪ training about disability issues and disability culture.
Support Services (Connecting Activities)	<p><i>All youth need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mental and physical health services; ▪ transportation; ▪ tutoring; ▪ post-program supports through structured arrangements in postsecondary institutions and adult service agencies; ▪ connection to other services and opportunities (e.g., recreation). <p><i>Youth with disabilities may need</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ appropriate assistive technologies; ▪ post-program supports such as independent living centers and other community-based support service agencies; ▪ personal assistance services, including readers and interpreters; ▪ benefits-planning counseling regarding the benefits available and their interrelationships so that individuals may maximize those benefits in transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency.

Statement of Work:

There are three major components to this evaluation project. The first is to suggest a methodology for the evaluation, the second is to perform the actual evaluation, and the third is to issue a written report summarizing the findings of the evaluation process and providing recommendations for future improvement activities. Dependent upon continued funding, the evaluation and report portions might be conducted more than once during the balance of the grant term.

A. Methodology:

Bidders are requested to suggest an evaluation methodology, taking into account the overall ODEP expectations of the grant, as well as specifically addressing the goals of the State Plan. The methodology should reflect the bidder's thoughts on

1. Ease and simplicity of implementation;
2. Comprehensiveness of data collection;
3. Ability to analyze and draw conclusions from the data collected;
4. Ability to recommend quality improvement activities based on data collected.

As the second and third portion of this statement of work is to implement the evaluation methodology and then report upon the outcome, the successful bidder shall be reimbursed for time spent on the methodology activity, within the constraints of the overall budget of this project.

B. Evaluation:

Bidders are requested to provide a description of how the evaluation methodology will be implemented. Include a timeline of activity, as well as the number of FTEs involved in the process.

C. Written Report:

A written report must be submitted within forty-five (45) days of the completion of the actual evaluation work. The report shall include the following sections, with appropriate content in each section:

1. Executive Summary
2. Background Information
3. Explanation of Methodology
4. Summary of Data
5. Analysis and Conclusions
6. Recommended Actions

Eligibility Requirements:

Both individuals and organizations are eligible to submit a proposal. Bidders must provide sufficient documentation of their qualifications to allow the Council to form an opinion as to the bidder's ability to meet the expected performance levels/outcomes. Three references are required. A familiarity with the New Hampshire environment, as it relates to its educational system, its approach to accessibility and disability awareness, and local community initiatives, should be demonstrated.

Funding:

The budget for the evaluation activities of this grant has been severely curtailed, due to funding cutbacks from ODEP. The amount reserved for evaluation activities during this third year of grant implementation is approximately \$20,000. Assuming continued funding from ODEP for Year 4 (9/30/06-9/29/07), additional funds should be available, allowing for a possible option to renew the contract for an additional evaluation and report to be completed.

Deadline for Receipt of Proposals: 4:00 p.m. Monday, December 19, 2005

Proposal Inquiries:

All questions about this Request for Proposals (RFP) must be submitted in writing by e-mail or fax no later than Monday December 12, 2005 to:

Cindy Naiditch
Workforce Opportunity Council
64 Old Suncook Road
Concord, NH 03301
Fax: (603) 228-8557
E-mail: cnaiditch@nhworkforce.org

Submission Requirement:

Proposals must be typed. An original proposal with original signatures on the cover sheets and four (4) identical copies of the proposal must be received **by no later than 4:00 p.m. EST on Monday, December 19, 2005** at:

Workforce Opportunity Council
Attn: Cindy Naiditch
64 Old Suncook Road
Concord, NH 03301

Estimated Schedule of Events (subject to change with holidays):

<u>Event</u>	<u>Completed by no later than</u>
Submission of Proposals:	December 19, 2005
Committee Review/Selection Process:	December 28, 2005
Notification of Award	December 30, 2005
Contract Negotiation/Finalization	January 9, 2006
System Evaluation	July 30, 2006
Written Report	September 15, 2006

Application Package:

Proposals should include the following:

- A. **Executive Summary** *No more than one (1) page.*
Provide a brief summary of the proposed services.

- B. **Description of your Organization** *No more than one (1) page*
Please tell us what kind of organization you operate. (For profit, non-profit, faith based, etc.). Please provide a brief description of the types of projects previously performed, which are similar in scope to this project. What is your familiarity with the New Hampshire educational environment? Please provide three (3) references (not part of the one-page limit).

- C. **Statement of Work** *No more than eight (8) pages*
In narrative form, please thoroughly address the stated requirements under this section of the RFP. Diagrams and/or charts may be used, if appropriate, to further clarify the bidder's approach to this project. A timeline of activities must be included, and will not count towards the 8-page narrative limit.

- D. **Budget and Budget Narrative**
On separate pages, give a budget outline with a narrative, which describes the logic used in arriving at a total for each line item in the budget. Include how personnel costs are calculated; the basis used in estimating costs, and how the cost items relate to the proposed project activities. This information does not count towards the 8-page Statement of Work limitation.

- E. **Proposal Cover Sheet (attachment A)**

- F. **Appendix A signed and dated.**

Scoring of the Proposal:

Executive Summary.....	5 points
Organization Description.....	5 points
Statement of Work.....	40 points
Budget.....	25 points

TOTAL.....75 points

Attachment A Proposal Cover Sheet

Applicant: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: _____ FAX: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Federal Tax ID No.: _____

If awarded funding, the applicant hereby certifies and assures that it will fully comply with the following federal regulations (if applicable to your organization):

- 29 CFR Part 96 (Single Audit Act)
- 29 CFR Part 98 (Debarment and Suspension: Drug-free Workplace)
- 29 CFR Part 93 (Lobbying Certification)
- 29 CFR Parts 33, 34, and 37 (Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity Requirements)
- Assurances (Non-Construction Programs)
- 29 CRP Part 97 (Uniform Administrative Requirements), Part 95 (Administrative Requirements for Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations), and any subsequent amendments
- P.L. 101-166, Sec. 511 (Federal Dollar Amount Participation)
- RSA 193:13 (Gun-Free Schools)
- Public Law 105-220, Workforce Investment Act
- 20 CFR Part 652 et al (Workforce Investment Act, Final Rules)

Applicant's signature below indicates organization is agreeing to comply fully with the assurances and certifications as part of its responsibilities as a successful vendor.

Signature

Date

Printed Name and Title

Appendix A

Other Terms and Conditions

- 1** Any costs incurred in responding to this request for proposal shall not be reimbursed.
- 2** The Council reserves the right to seek clarification of any information contained in a proposal submitted, or to hold discussions, but is not obligated to do so.
- 3** The Council reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted. In addition, the distribution of this RFP shall not commit the Council to issue a contract.
- 4** Unless otherwise noted in the RFP, any work performed by a successful applicant prior to the effective date of a contract shall not be reimbursed.
- 5** Funding of any contract under this initiative is subject to the availability and continued appropriation of federal funds awarded under the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. The Council shall not be liable for any payments in excess of such available appropriated funds. In the event of reduction or termination of those funds, the Council shall have the right to withhold payment until such funds become available, if ever, and shall have the right to terminate or amend the contract immediately upon giving the contractor notice of such termination or amendment.
- 6** When delivering services under an approved contract, the contractor shall work under the broad supervision of the Council and DDC for this project.
- 7** Unless otherwise deleted or modified by mutual agreement between the Council and the contractor, all general provisions contained on the Proposal Cover Sheet (attachment A) shall be incorporated into the contract.
- 8** The Council reserves the right to negotiate a best and final offer with applicant(s) selected for contract award(s).
- 9** Payments shall be made on a cost reimbursement basis. Monthly invoices shall detail expenses based on the line items in the proposal budget. Generally, the Council will pay invoices within 15 days of receipt, unless questions arise as to the appropriateness of an expense.
- 10** All information received by the contractor during the course of this grant is considered confidential, and shall be protected to the utmost ability of the contractor.
- 11** Contracts awarded under this funding initiative shall be subject to and interpreted under the laws and jurisdiction of New Hampshire.

Signature

Date