



Workforce
Opportunity
Council, Inc.

Leveraging Resources for New Hampshire's Future

Request for Proposals

Seeking qualified vendor to create and submit an evaluation instrument capable of evaluating 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

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.

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 just finished its first quarter of 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 overall objectives outlined by ODEP in the original Notice of Award. The State Plan, which is currently in final draft form, has been posted on the NH Works website under “Breaking News” (www.nhworks.org). The 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”. The Guideposts may be found on the website with the other related RFP documents.

Statement of Work

A. Creation of Evaluation Instrument

Bidders are requested to provide a specific evaluation instrument, based on the State Plan and other related materials. Bidders are cautioned to provide *more* than a simple description of how the evaluation instrument will be created. The expectation is that a large enough portion of the actual instrument will be submitted to allow evaluators to understand the methodology proposed by the Bidder. (*Example: Take 2-3 goals and create the evaluation instrument that would measure progress toward goal outcomes.*)

While it is recognized that the State and Regional Goals listed in the State Plan appear to be overwhelming due to the multiple tasks associated with each, and that several action steps lack a *quantified* expected outcome, Bidders are asked to consider and recommend the specific method of evaluation to determine if the goal has been (or is being) met. For instance, who would be interviewed and/or what specific data would be collected to illustrate that progress on the goal is on track. Please also note that some goals have, in fact, been accomplished, such as the creation of the Project Oversight Committee and the Regional Intermediary Collaboratives. However, measuring the effectiveness of these groups might still be an appropriate item to include in the evaluation instrument.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Ease and simplicity of implementation of the instrument;
2. Comprehensiveness of data collection resulting from use of the instrument;
3. Ability to analyze and draw conclusions on goal outcomes from the data collected;
4. Ability to recommend quality improvement activities based on data collected; and
5. Cost proposed by bidder.

B. Required Update and Draft Instrument

The vendor will be required to submit a written update, and draft of the Instrument, 45 days from the effective date of the contract. (see “*Estimated Schedule of Events*”) Vendor will have access to Council and DDC staff, as well as available Project Oversight Committee (POC) members, if necessary, to ask questions and clarify expectations during this 45-day period.

The Council reserves the right to request an actual meeting/interview with the vendor at time of draft submission to gain clarification on the Instrument, as well as to allow discussion regarding possible revisions suggested by the Project Oversight Committee after their review of the materials.

C. Required Presentation of the Instrument to the Project Oversight Committee (POC)

The vendor will be required to meet with the POC at one of their regularly scheduled meetings to (1) present the Evaluation Instrument, (2) explain its use and expected results, and (3) to offer suggestions and/or advice relating to the implementation of the project evaluation through use of the Instrument. A final written report briefly summarizing the above items is also required.

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. The Council reserves the right to verify past performance and check references. 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 evaluation activities of this grant has been severely curtailed, due to funding cutbacks from ODEP. The amount reserved for creation of the evaluation instrument 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 the funded implementation of the evaluation instrument. The Council, at its sole discretion, may elect to negotiate with the successful vendor of this RFP to implement the actual evaluation, may reissue an RFP for this portion of the project, or may pursue other available options, whichever it deems appropriate at the time.

The payment schedule for this project will be negotiated with the successful vendor, but is expected to follow the general approach of an initial payment of 25% of the contract amount; an additional 25% at the completion and submission of the draft Instrument; 45% at the completion and submission of the final Instrument; and 5% at the completion of the POC meeting/final report requirement.

<p>Deadline for Receipt of Proposals: 4:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 8, 2006</p>
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Proposal Inquiries

All questions about this Request for Proposals (RFP) must be submitted in writing by e-mail or fax no later than Monday, January 30, 2006 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 signature(s) on the cover sheet and one (1) identical copy of the proposal must be received **by no later than 4:00 p.m. EST on Wednesday, February 8, 2006** at:

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

Estimated Schedule of Events (subject to change)

<u>Event</u>	<u>Completed by no later than</u>
• Submission of Proposals:	February 8, 2006
• Committee Review/Selection Process:	February 14, 2006
• Notification of Award	February 16, 2006
• Contract Negotiation/Finalization	February 28, 2006
• Draft Instrument/Update/Add'l Info Exchange	April 14, 2006
• Evaluation Instrument Completed	July 30, 2006
• Meet with Committee and present/explain Evaluation Instrument	TBD

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?

C. Statement of Work

Please thoroughly address the stated requirements under this section of the RFP.

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. Attachment B 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

Attachment B

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** 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.
- 5** When delivering services under an approved contract, the contractor shall work under the broad supervision of the Council and DDC for this project.
- 6** 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.
- 7** The Council reserves the right to negotiate a best and final offer with applicant(s) selected for contract award(s).
- 8** Payments shall be made upon receipt of invoices, and per the negotiated schedule in the contract. 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.
- 9** 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.
- 10** Contracts awarded under this funding initiative shall be subject to and interpreted under the laws and jurisdiction of New Hampshire.

Signature

Date