



Request for Proposals

Seeking qualified vendor(s) to conduct a needs assessment, gap analysis, and subsequent recommendations for current and former out-of-home care youth (including youth in foster, relative, and residential care) since 2000, in Manchester, NH.

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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.

Request for Proposals

Purpose:

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is seeking qualified vendor(s) to conduct a needs assessment, gap analysis, and subsequent recommendations based on the needs assessment data. The needs assessment is to be developed via survey and focus groups including current and former out-of-home care youth (including youth in foster, relative, and residential care) since 2000, in Manchester, NH.

Background:

The White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth, released in December 2003, articulated a set of broad goals for disadvantaged youth in the country, including that they "grow up ready for work, college and military service." The report also recommended that youth programs focus on serving the neediest youth, with priority given to out-of-school youth, high school dropouts, runaway and homeless youth, youth in foster care, court involved youth, youth with disabilities, children of incarcerated parents and migrant youth.

Four federal agencies jointly convened states to communicate the Vision and provide strategic planning and support to state teams. Further support was provided to states, including New Hampshire, that were selected as "Pilot States". The federal agencies' expected results from the states for this project are:

- Interagency coordination and integration of services,
- Multiple partner agencies working together at the service delivery level to serve specific youth populations,
- Engaging business and industry,
- Interagency state teams' definition, collection and validation of measurable outcomes for neediest youth,
- Implementation of replication and sustainability strategies, and
- Development of a "blueprint" model that will assist in the State's Collaborative Shared Youth Vision efforts.

NH's Vision partner agencies include:

- NH Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Education, Bureau of Career and Technical Education, Bureau of Special Education, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Bureau of Workforce Investment.
- NH Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Behavioral Health, Division for Children, Youth, and Families, and Division for Juvenile Justice Services.
- NH Employment Security and
- Workforce Opportunity Council

In NH's application for federal funding, we sought to improve services to out-of-home care youth. The specific population is current and former out-of-home care youth (including youth in foster, relative, and residential care since 2000) from the Manchester, NH district office. Through this Request for Proposal, we are seeking a contractor to conduct a needs assessment and develop subsequent recommendations based on the needs assessment data. The needs assessment is to be developed and completed via surveys and focus groups of: 1) youth in out-of-home care, 2) child protection workers and juvenile

protection and parole officers, foster parents, relatives, caregivers, and residential staff, 3) NH Works and Vision Partner personnel, 4) businesses, business associations and professional organizations and 5) Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), guardians ad litum (GAL), mental health professionals, community and faith based organizations, and youth serving organizations including secondary school transitional plan personnel, guidance counselors, and social workers to determine what services work, where transitional gaps exist and where increased coordination with other systems needs to occur. The report is to be completed and submitted no later than March 15, 2008.

There is \$23,350 available of federal funds. An additional \$2250 will be paid by partner personnel for outreach to youth via notices of focus groups in newspapers and flyers through partner agencies. Additional monies are available should partner agencies not be able to host focus groups and will be paid outside of this contract for a hosting site (i.e. local hotel). Youth participating in surveys and focus groups will be provided a stipend gift card for their participation as well as staff transportation or travel reimbursement.

Applicant Eligibility:

Individuals and organizations, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, having the appropriate experience and expertise are eligible to apply to this RFP, including faith or community-based organizations. Incorporated or d/b/a applicants must show proof of being registered with the NH Secretary of State.

Applicants will be deemed not eligible for funding for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to deliver the proposal by the time and date it is due.
2. Failure to provide the required content, or follow the prescribed application format as set forth in this RFP.

Statement of Work:

1. Design sample survey for each stake holder group.
 - A. Develop a sample survey for review and approval by contractor and Manchester Youth Vision Advisory Team.
 - B. Design focus group questions for review and approval.
 - C. Contractor will be responsible for distribution of surveys to all other parties: workforce, community-based organizations, families, etc. (Survey will be distributed by partner agencies to former and current youth in residential care.)
2. Contact subjects.
 - A. DCYF and DJJS will mail the survey to current and former youth in care with return postage envelopes addressed to Contractor.
 - B. DCYF and DJJS will mail notifications to youth of focus group meetings. DCYF and DJJS will obtain appropriate parental permission.
 - C. Contractor will contact other parties including workforce, community-based organizations, families, etc.
 - D. Conduct Focus Groups. Contractor will work with Manchester Youth Vision Advisory Committee regarding locations for various focus groups.
 - E. Collect results. Contractor will collect the survey results and store them in a manner that adheres to federal guidelines.

3. Design database. Contractor will design a suitable database that captures the variables and responses from the surveys.
 - A. Enter data. Contractor will enter the data collected from the surveys into the database, and check a sample no smaller than 10 percent of the total for accuracy.
 - B. Clean data. Contractor will develop and execute a protocol for ‘cleaning’ the data of obvious mistakes and editing inconsistent entries.
4. Focus Groups: This RFP seeks a contractor to conduct focus group surveys for
 - A. Youth in out-of-home care,
 - B. Child protection workers and juvenile protection and parole officers, foster parents, relatives, caregivers, and residential staff,
 - C. NH Works and Vision Partner personnel,
 - D. Businesses, business associations, and professional organizations, and
 - E. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Guardian Ad Litum (GAL), mental health professionals, community and faith based organizations, and youth serving organizations including secondary school transitional plan personnel, guidance counselors, and social workers.
5. Scheduling: Contractor will provide Council and Manchester Youth Vision Advisory Team with a schedule of site locations and dates, groups, and interviews and update it on an on-going basis.
6. Meeting with Manchester Youth Vision Advisory Team Committee or designee(s) (anticipate minimum monthly)
7. Preparation of scripts for focus groups: Contractor will provide Council and Manchester Youth Vision Advisory Team with a detailed script for each group and interview category that is subject to approval.
8. Logistics: Contractor will be responsible for ascertaining, making arrangements for, and providing all necessary arrangements and incentives needed to conduct successful groups and interviews.
9. Facilitating: Contractor will travel with one or more Youth Vision Partner staff to the focus groups. It is expected that the scheduling process will cluster groups and interviews so as to minimize the number of visits to each site. Contractor will facilitate each focus group (1.5 – 2 hours).
 - A. Interviews in place of focus groups: If contractor, in consultation with Manchester Youth Vision Advisory Committee, determines that it is not feasible to set up a focus group for a specific group, one-on-one interviews may be conducted in this category. This decision will be made on a case by case basis. These interviews must be taped and transcribed as above.
10. Notes: Contractor will provide brief (1-5 pages) notes on the principal themes and findings of each focus group.
11. Final report that summarizes focus groups and survey data, gap analysis and findings with corresponding recommendations.

Confidentiality:

The contractor must agree to observe rigorous measures for the protection of subject confidentiality and anonymity. Standard consent forms will be provided by the COUNCIL. The attorneys, social workers, and CASAs will need to be informed about the youth’s participation in focus groups, and some negotiation over permission for youth to participate is to be expected. All tapes, transcripts, participant lists and informed consent forms are confidential and must be returned with the final deliverables. The contractor is to retain no information about any participant’s identity, location, or interview status.

Required Deliverables:

Strategies	Timeline to be achieved
Contractor develops tools (survey and questions for various focus groups) for review by Manchester Youth Vision Advisory team	Oct 30, 2007
Distribution of survey and commencement of focus groups	December 1, 2007
Completion of focus groups, interviews, and surveying	February 28 2008
Development of final gap analysis report and recommendations, based on input from focus groups, interviews and survey results and submission to Manchester Youth Vision Advisory Team and Workforce Opportunity Council	March 15, 2008

Proposal Review Process and/or Funding Decision Process:

A subcommittee comprised of Vision Team members and staff will evaluate proposals in accordance with the requirements provided in this RFP.

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 award funds to any applicant.

Any costs incurred in responding to this RFP shall not be reimbursed.

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.

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.

Funding of any contract awarded under this initiative is subject to the availability and continued appropriation of federal funds awarded through the 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.

Proposal Outline: Responsive proposals should provide straightforward, concise information that satisfies the requirements noted. Expensive bindings, color displays, and the like are not necessary or desired. Emphasis should be placed on conformity to the instructions, requirements of this RFP, and completeness and clarity of content.

Narrative: Please describe the:

1. Proposed process necessary to address the project objectives.
2. Proposed project and team organization.
3. Proposed methodology. For the focus groups, interviews, and community meetings, describe the methods for recruiting participants, ensuring adequate participation, and the method employed to lead groups, as well as record and transcribe all proceedings. (Note: DCYF and DJJS will mail notices and survey tool to current and former students.)
4. Proposed data collection methods. For the survey, include methods of follow-up and address verification to ensure an adequate response rate, data entry, data cleaning and editing. For qualitative data collection and group meetings, include methods to ensure adequate participation, recording of focus groups, interviews, and meetings, transcribing of recordings, and ensuring the accuracy of the transcripts.
5. Proposed methods for ensuring confidentiality of survey respondents, and focus group, interview, and group participants.
6. Contact information. Provide proposer's point of contact, including name, physical and electronic addresses, and telephone and facsimile numbers.

Budget and Cost Effectiveness:

As a separate document, submit a detailed line item budget showing total cost of the services. This budget should identify unique hourly rates, titles, and responsibilities for each "Key Personnel," but can group this information for other personnel in a more general manner. Staff rates should be fully described, including indirect costs, overhead and profit. The cost proposal should also include separate line items for postage/ mailing costs and travel and lodging (if applicable).

Prior Experience:

1. Provide the names, physical and electronic addresses, and telephone numbers of a minimum of three (3) clients for whom the proposer has conducted similar services. These references may be contacted.
2. Proposal shall include a minimum of two examples of other quantitative and qualitative research projects.
3. Proposer has demonstrated experience with quantitative and qualitative research related to the functioning of similar populations and services.

4. Desirable, but not necessary, proposer has experience working with current and former child protection and/or juvenile justice youth.

Job Descriptions:

Credentials of staff to be assigned to the Project. Describe key staff's knowledge of the requirements necessary to complete this project. Provide professional qualifications and experience of key staff, as well as each individual's ability and experience in conducting the proposed activities. Submit hardcopy of key staff's information in the proposal.

Ability to meet timing requirements to complete project:

Overall plan with time estimates for completion of all work required.

Additional Requirements:

It may be necessary to interview prospective applicants to clarify aspects of their submittal. If conducted, interviews will likely be conducted by telephone conference call. The Workforce Opportunity Council and/or Manchester Youth Vision Team will notify prospective applicants regarding any interview arrangements.

Proposal Inquiries:

All questions about this Request for Proposals (RFP) must be submitted by e-mail no later than Friday, August 31 at 1 pm to psulliva@dhhs.state.nh.us

Answers will be posted on www.nhworks.org by Wednesday noon, September 5th.

Submission Requirement:

Proposals must be typed. An original proposal with original signatures on the cover sheet and eight (8) identical copies of the proposal must be received **by no later than noon EST on Friday September 7, 2007** at:

Workforce Opportunity Council
Attn: Youth Vision
64 Old Suncook Road
Concord, NH 03301

Estimated Schedule of Events (subject to change):

Event	Date	Time
Release of RFP	July 30, 2007	
Technical Assistance Conference at Workforce Opportunity Council Office 64 Old Suncook Road, Concord, NH 03301	August 10, 2007	10 am
Deadline for submission of questions	August 31, 2007	1 pm
Deadline for submission of proposals (must be in possession of Workforce Opportunity Council)	September 7, 2007	Noon
Proposal Review	September 8-19, 2007	
Contract Award and Contracting	September 20-30, 2007	
Contract Begins	October 1, 2007	

Scoring of the Proposal:

Narrative	20 points
Budget and Cost Effectiveness	15 points
Prior Experience	30 points
Job Descriptions	15 points
Ability to meet timing requirements to complete project	20 points

Qualifications of Vendor:

The vendor will be evaluated based on previous experience (same or similar), thus the vendor should describe past projects that demonstrate an ability to perform the requested work, within the required timeframes. Samples of previous reports are encouraged to illustrate the vendor's approach to information dissemination. Resumes of staff performing the work, if available, should be attached to the proposal.

Deadline for Receipt of Proposals:
Noon, Friday, September 7, 2007

Certification and Other Terms/Conditions

1. The signing individual certifies that he/she is authorized to contract on behalf of the organization offering this proposal.
2. The signing individual certifies that the prices in this proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, or agreements made for the purpose of restricting competition.
3. When delivering services under an approved contract, the contractor shall work under the broad supervision of Council staff.
4. The signing individual certifies that there has been no attempt by him/her or anyone in their organization to discourage any potential applicant from submitting a proposal.
5. The signing individual certifies that he/she has read and understands all of the information in this Request for Proposals.
6. The signing individual certifies that his/her organization, and any individuals to be assigned to the project, does not have a record of substandard work and has not been debarred or suspended from doing work with any federal, state, or local government.
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 selected.
9. Payments shall be made on a cost reimbursement basis (no advances). 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 the contract period is considered confidential, and shall be protected to the utmost ability of the contractor. The contract shall include more specific language on this issue.
11. The contract awarded under this RFP shall be subject to and interpreted under the laws and jurisdiction of New Hampshire.

Signature

Date

(signed certification/conditions to be returned with the proposal)