



Board of Commissioners:
Pat DeWine, David Pepper, Todd Portune
County Administrator: Patrick J. Thompson
Director: Moira Weir

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI 08-003)

FOR

YOUTH SERVICES UNDER THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)

RFI # 08-003

Issued by

Area 13

Southwest Ohio Regional Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council

In partnership with

City of Cincinnati, Office of the Mayor, and

Hamilton County Job & Family Services

March, 2008

Due date for written responses: March 31, 2008

MISSION STATEMENT

The Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board will create and develop a comprehensive workforce development system that will engage the entire community towards ever-increasing levels of self-sufficiency.

HCJFS Contact Person

The **HCJFS Contact Person** and mailing address for questions about the enclosed Request for Information is:

*Beverly Donald, Contract Services
Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services
222 East Central Parkway, 3rd floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202*

Organizations are encouraged to respond to this RFI. The preferred method by the WIB is at one of the two public forums. The forums will be held:

Date: March 27, 2008 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

March 31, 2008 9:30 a.m.-11:30a.m.

BOTH PUBLIC FORUMS WILL TAKE PLACE AT:

**Super Jobs Center
1916 Central Parkway
2nd Floor, Room A
Cincinnati, OH 45214**

An additional method is through written responses submitted via mail, email or fax to the HCJFS Contact Person no later than 9:30 a.m on March 31, 2008

Questions regarding the RFI may also be faxed to (513) 946-2384 or e-mailed to DONALB@ifs.hamilton-co.org.

All respondents will be made aware of any resulting Request for Proposals that are issued.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Area 13 Workforce Investment Board (WIB) is seeking input for innovative and effective ways to provide WIA services to youth who have dropped out of school and who are now successfully on the path to completing their GED/diploma, or who have successfully completed their GED or Diploma. The major portion of the funding will be devoted to direct payments up to \$5,000 for post secondary training institutions for tuition and typical supportive services such as books and transportation.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Potential eligible and suitable participants will sign an agreement indicating they understand the expectations of the program and will complete the program in a timely fashion. Non-completion of the program will mean that they cannot re-enter the program.
- Students who wish to enter the program do so on a term-by-term basis. Each term must be completed successfully with a minimum GPA of at least 2.0 in order to be funded for the next term. If the GPA requirement for any particular program is higher, that requirement will apply.
- Participants served must be WIA eligible and all ten (10) WIA program elements must be available and accessible. **See attachment A - Summary.**
- Services will focus on participants 16 to 21 years of age. We want to serve approximately 100.
- Each participant in the program will be assessed using the ACT Compass Instrument; the computer-adaptive assessment program that evaluates students' skill levels in math, reading, writing skills, and ESL, Accuplacer, and online instrument, or some other quality instrument. Each agency will be evaluated on its ability to contract with developmental education to remediate participants in areas where scoring indicates deficiencies.
- All prospective vendors must demonstrate a strong past success record in providing above services.
- The selected vendor will work with youth to exhaust opportunities for Pell grants and other access to funding for training and education. These efforts must be clearly documented.
- The selected vendor will be expected to use the logic model as a data collection tool for demonstrating local outcomes over and above those basics required under state and federal rules.
- The selected vendor will receive incentive payments for successful outcomes.
- The selected vendor will identify partner education and training institutions with specific programs in place (with demonstrated record of success) to deliver training and industry recognized professional certificates in areas of high demand, high growth, and high wage professions.

Please come prepared to discuss and respond to the following questions in response to the RFI at the open forums. If unable to attend please submit written comments no more than five (5) pages by March 31, 2008 by 9:00 a.m. (see page 2 for instructions).

- 1. What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of this model?**
- 2. Does this model align with local, state, and federal priorities?**
- 3. What, if any changes would you make to this model?**

WIA Youth Eligibility Criteria

_____ 1. Comply with Selective Services legislation by providing documents to demonstrate compliance with Selective Services requirements.

_____ 2. Comply with citizenship and eligibility to work requirements by providing documents necessary to validate same.

_____ 3. Is age 14 through 21; **AND**

_____ 4. Is a low income individual as defined by one of the following 6 criteria with appropriate documentation.

_____ a. Receives OWF cash assistance

_____ b. Receives food stamp assistance (or received them in the last 6 months)

_____ c. Is homeless

_____ d. Is a foster child

_____ e. Is disabled with personal income below the poverty level (without regard for family income)

_____ f. Lives in a household with income, in the last 6 months prior to application, (excluding unemployment compensation, child support payments, and Social Security old-age and survivors benefits) that, in relation to family size, does not exceed the poverty line. **AND**

_____ 5. Is an individual who is one or more of the following:

_____ a. Deficient in basic literacy skills.

_____ b. School dropout

_____ c. Homeless

_____ d. Runaway

_____ e. Foster child

_____ f. Pregnant or a parent

_____ g. An offender

10 Required WIA Program Elements

Adult mentoring - Services that require mature and responsible adults to engage youth in a variety of activities contributing to their physical, mental, and social well-being for a duration of at least 12 months during and after program participation. These may be employment, career and situation mentors selected to fit the needs of the particular youth. For youth that participate in a work component, mentors may counsel on managing time and stress, balancing work and school and/or home commitments, accepting new responsibilities, and dealing with work relationship and etiquette. Mentors can also help youth address work problems that might otherwise lead to their quitting or being fired. The provider must conduct a background check on all mentors prior to placing them with a youth.

Alternative secondary school services – Any programs leading to diplomas and other credentials but provide a more flexible setting for youth who are no longer able or wish to attend regular high schools. These may include, but are not limited to, GED programs, drop-out recovery programs, virtual learning, correspondence courses, independent study, adult basic literacy education, and Job Corps.

Comprehensive guidance and counseling – Case management, career and behavior counseling, including career guidance counseling, alcohol and drug treatment, psychological counseling, parenting classes and counseling for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, health services, housing, specialized assessment for learning disabilities and visual/hearing impairments.

Follow-up services -- Youth must receive follow-up for a minimum of 12 months after exiting from WIA Services. While the frequency of follow up contacts are determined by the needs of individual youth, provider must successfully contact each youth a minimum of once a quarter, offer services and document the youth's status, particularly as it relates to post exit state standards, on the established form. The services will include any services needed to keep a youth engaged in school, training, or work. Follow-up may include leadership development and supportive service activities; linkage to the One Stop Center, regular contact with a youth's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise, assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development and further education; work-related peer support groups, adult mentoring, and tracking progress of youth in employment after training.

Leadership development -- Opportunities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors such as: community and service learning projects, peer centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring, team work and team leadership training, training in decision making including determining priorities, citizenship training including life skills training such as parenting, work behavior training, and budgeting of resources. All youth should have the opportunity to participate in leadership activities.

Occupational skill training– Individual training in occupational areas for which there is high demand within the regional labor market, with an emphasis on high skilled and higher wage jobs. Such training may include on-the-job training, rehabilitation programs, apprenticeships, and vocational training. Training should lead to a certificate. Youth involved in training should have an occupational skills goal set.

For youth 18 years and older, opportunities are available through the One-Stop's Individual Training Program and referrals can be made to the Eligible Training Provider list.

Paid and unpaid work experience – Work experiences are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace or a work-like setting for a limited period of time. Work experience may take place in the private, for profit sector, the non-profit sector or the public sector. Work experience may include but is not limited to such activities as work adjustment, occupational work experience, instruction in SCANS skills, entrepreneurship, job shadowing, internships, job placement, apprenticeships, work-based learning experiences, and paid community service. It may also include other “work readiness” programming focusing on employability skills, skills for living independently, and getting and keeping a job.

Work experience exposes youth to the working world and its requirements, and helps youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment.

Provider will provide youth with activities to gain knowledge of services offered at the One Stop.

The goal of WIA is to assure youth desiring jobs at exit have full-time jobs with the highest possible wages and chances for income growth. Program designs may utilize temporary, seasonal or part-time positions for work experience but keep in mind that these positions should be developing youth's potential for adequate annual incomes and a promising career path.

Summer employment-- These activities, an important part of the year round program, link academic and occupational learning and may include such activities as work experience in the public and private sectors and placement in private sector employment connected to career interests and training needs. Summer employment may be subsidized or unsubsidized and can include employment, internships, work-based learning, and enrichment programs. Active youth must be given the opportunity to participate in summer employment activities if they and their families wish.

Employment should provide supportive supervision and reinforce work readiness skills like attendance, punctuality, responsibility, completing tasks and recognizing quality performance.

Summer employment activities should offer safe environments and adhere to all minor labor laws. Staff will assist youth in obtaining work permits, education certificates, and medical examination where required

Attachment A
WIA Youth Eligibility Criteria and 10 Required WIA Elements

Supportive services – Services or items that are necessary for a youth to overcome impediments to participating in WIA services and getting or keeping a job. Services include linkages to community services, assistance with transportation and childcare, referrals to medical and housing services, needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIA, and assistance with appropriate work attire and tools. Youth should be assessed initially and on an ongoing basis for their need for supportive services.

To the greatest extent possible, provider should address supportive service needs through leveraging of resources and partnerships with other community providers.

Tutoring – Any service (including study skills training) which enables youth to prevent drop out and complete the courses necessary to obtain a diploma or GED or to increase their basic skills. Upgrading of basic skills may be integrated with other services, such as work experience, leadership development, or summer activities. Individual instruction may include computer-assisted learning, one on one or group tutoring or after school, or in-school interventions by the classroom teacher. Training in study skills should explicitly teach self-monitoring and organizational skills, as well as strategies for acquiring and applying new knowledge.

The design should encourage and motivate youth to complete their secondary education, provide activities and situations to learn and apply their basic education skills, incorporate alternative and innovative approaches to teaching basic educational skills, including tutoring activities when necessary; project-based and work-based learning activities and include strategies to expose young people to the world of work and career opportunities.