



**Request for Proposals
Job Training Services
Neighborhood Jobs Trust
FY 2016**

**Neighborhood
Jobs Trust**



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

Issue Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2015
Bidders' Conference: Tuesday, October 27, 2015 at 10:30 AM, BRA Board Room
Letter of Intent Due: Wednesday, November 4, 2015
Proposals Due: Friday, November 20, 2015 by 5:00PM

Responses must be electronically submitted by Friday, November 20, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. to
cindy.chow@boston.gov

Inquiries: todd.lee@boston.gov

Table of Contents

RFP Overview and Purpose	2
Purpose of Funds.....	2
Funding Availability and Period of Performance	3
Eligibility of Applicants	4
Participant Eligibility and Targeted Populations	5
Services Requested	6
Performance Standards	8
Program Monitoring/Reporting	9
Proposal Guidelines	10
Terms of Procurement	13
Proposal Specifications	14
Evaluation of Proposals	14
Proposal Checklist	15
Appendices.....	16

I. OVERVIEW

RFP OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (OWD) is the City of Boston's workforce development agency. Under the leadership of Mayor Martin J. Walsh, OWD administers funding from various sources for the purpose of supporting a broad range of services including education and training, career development, job training, adult basic education, and youth employment services leading to greater economic security. One such funding source is the City of Boston's Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT), which distributes the jobs linkage funds paid by developers of large-scale commercial construction projects. The Jobs Trust was established in 1987 in response to pressure from community organizations interested in making sure Boston residents benefited from employment generated by development. The founding documents of the Trust stipulate that the funds must be used to provide, to low and moderate income Boston residents, direct services which prepare them for and connect them to employment.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) solicits competitive proposals for job training services. The Trust is issuing this RFP through its administrative agent, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, a division of the Boston Redevelopment Authority/Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (BRA/EDIC). OWD will handle all questions concerning this RFP, review all submissions, and prepare funding recommendations. Selected applicants will enter into contracts with EDIC.

PURPOSE OF FUNDS

Jobs linkage funding must be used to meet the employment needs of lower income Boston residents, defined as below 80% of median income according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Appendix C). The Trustees are interested in serving lower-skilled individuals, with multiple barriers to employment.

The Neighborhood Jobs Trust is obligated to maintain a balance between services targeted to specific neighborhoods impacted by development and services accessible to residents across the city, including neighborhoods not currently impacted by large-scale development. In reviewing proposals and making funding decisions, the Trustees will be mindful of the need to maintain this balance.

The intent of this RFP is to serve Boston residents seeking full-time (at least 30 hours per week), permanent employment. The outcome of the program must be a training-related job, or placement into a post-secondary program leading to a position that is full-time and meets the living wage of \$14.11/hour. Educational placements must have evidence of value or recognition in the particular economic sector leading to better opportunities for advancement. For certain populations, part-time jobs (at least 20 hours per week) may be a strategic first step. Applicants proposing such strategies, however, must make a compelling argument in their

favor. Services should include outreach and recruitment, in-depth assessment, classroom and (as appropriate) work-site instruction, case management, educational and career counseling, job placement, and post-placement services. We encourage designs that place participants on a career pathway that can lead to higher-paying jobs and have access to employer-provided education benefits and support in further training leading to better jobs.

Programs which currently run training programs based on training vouchers should not expect to receive a group contract under this RFP simply to serve more people. We seek programming that builds upon and fills gaps in the federally-funded workforce system. We also seek innovative models or approach which respond to both job seeker and employer needs and result in successful job placements with advancement opportunities in today's changing economy. Because a significant part of developing economic security for families is financial management, we encourage program designs that include financial education and asset building opportunities for participants. It is also essential that proposed services are customized to the attributes and support needs of the program's target populations, and assist that population in overcoming their barriers to employment.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

OWD intends to award grants ranging from \$50,000 - \$100,000 for a period of one year to successful applicants. Contracts resulting from this RFP are anticipated to commence February 1, 2016 and end on January 31, 2017.

II. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are:

- Non-profit providers holding 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code, those who are in the process of receiving such status, or have an identified fiscal sponsor holding 501(c)(3); or
- Non-profit higher education institutions.

In addition, applicants must:

- Be located in Boston and will serve Boston residents only with these funds.

Proposals must demonstrate capacity to provide state-of-the-art services to successfully prepare Boston residents for employment. The Trust is interested in proposals from training providers with the following competencies:

- Demonstrated ability to successfully educate, train and job-place low to moderate income residents, including one or more of the specific target populations identified above.
- Staff expertise in providing proactive case management to support clients in overcoming barriers to training, completing a program and retaining employment.
- Demonstrated ability to adapt curriculum and instructional methodology to meet the needs of people with a variety of learning styles and ability levels.
- Internal monitoring capabilities which allow for program modification as needed.
- Staff experience in engaging employers and strong employer involvement in program design.
- Staffing structures which support the services proposed.
- Programs designed to meet the needs of specific target populations with multiple barriers to employment through various support services.
- Integrated training models which incorporate adult basic education or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and which connect participants to jobs and/or to post-secondary education leading to employment.
- Reemployment of dislocated workers and a commitment to provide training and related services to lower-income adults with multiple barriers to employment.

Ultimately, the Trust will be looking for evidence of strong employer involvement in the form of a detailed Memorandum of Agreement. Multiple employer partners are encouraged. Proposals should clearly describe the skill competencies required by the employer partners. Applicants are encouraged to present data documenting need in the occupations they are targeting.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY AND TARGET POPULATIONS

This RFP solicits programs and services targeted to **individuals in need of skilled employment who are unemployed or underemployed**. This can include people who have been out of the labor force for some time as well as individuals who are underemployed. For purposes of this RFP, underemployed can mean: those in temporary, part-time or unstable positions; those working in jobs without benefits; those whose income does not suffice to meet the needs of their families.

Participants funded by this grant must meet these eligibility criteria:

- Boston resident.
- 18 years old or older.
- Must be willing and able to be placed in and retain full-time, unsubsidized employment or be placed in post-secondary education leading to a career leading to full time employment in a living wage job.
- Must meet income guideline of being at or under the income benchmarks in Appendix C.

Populations particularly targeted by this RFP for service are:

- Ex-offenders and other individuals with CORI issues;
- Homeless, recently-homeless or near-homeless individuals;
- Housing voucher recipients; or
- TANF recipients.

While not every individual in a training program funded under this RFP must come from one of these target populations, it is expected that at least **25% of NJT-funded participants meet one or more of these criteria**.

III. SERVICES REQUESTED

A. REQUIRED SERVICE ELEMENTS

1. Recruitment

Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the target population and how to best engage that population. Recruitment plans should include a comprehensive recruitment strategy that will lead to the desired level of enrollment, has specific groups and organizations who are outreach partners, and has tested methods of conducting outreach.

2. Assessment

In order to ensure participants are successful and receive appropriate services, a thorough and in-depth assessment of the prospective participant is essential. Staff expertise in areas relevant to the target population, along with employer input about industry needs, add particular value to the assessment process. Applicants should explain the process they use to assess potential participants, the steps and tools involved, and how their assessment protocol improves the service model. Individuals unready for the program must be referred to other appropriate services. Attendance and conduct policies should be discussed with the participant at initial assessment. Termination policies must be consistent, clearly defined and publicized in writing.

3. Case Management, Career Counseling and Support Services

A clear case management strategy for a coordinated response to participants' needs is essential to their success. The first steps are career counseling and the development of an individual service plan based on a thorough assessment of the individual's assets and aspirations, as well as any barriers to employment. The plan must be jointly developed with the participant, and regularly reviewed by the service provider team and the participant. The plan should have clear education, employment and career goals, and a timeline for reaching them. Effective case management identifies concrete steps to overcome barriers to success. Case managers monitor participant attendance and performance, problem-solving with them as necessary. After job placement, staff should continue to provide support to ensure job retention and address any concerns employers may have. Finally, case management should include partners for referral for issues staff don't have the expertise to address, such as psychological clinical assessment and care, special educational needs, etc.

4. Job Training

Job Training should have clear goals, objects, and methods of instruction. Competencies should be defined at every level in order to be able to evaluate progress and define achievement.

Students need to develop greater understanding of technology, especially online job search and online application, which are becoming nearly universal. Programs should combine basic skills, computer skills, soft skills and vocational skills. Programs must be able to give specific examples of how these are combined in individual lessons. Programs should have classes ordered into a curriculum, and have regular weekly and daily schedules. Programs must integrate basic skills, computer skills, soft skills and vocational skills. Training should have written curriculum, and a regular weekly or daily schedule.

5. Employer Partnerships

Employers should be involved in as many aspects of your program as feasible. Proposals must include a Memorandum of Agreement with **at least one employer** that describes the commitments of that business in the activities of the program. These could include: curriculum development, industry briefings for staff and participants, interviewing of graduates, providing internships, etc.

7. Job Development, Job Placement and Post-placement Services

Programs will teach their students how to research careers and various job search strategies. Target occupations should be selected based on reliable local or regional information on job openings and other labor market information, as well as an evaluation of the match with your targeted population. Given the increase in reliance on online methods to screen potential job applicants, students should be trained on applying for jobs online and specifically online applications. . Programs should be able to describe a timeline of job development, job placement and post-placement activities based on industry timetables and course schedules. . Programs should have varied relationships with an employers that add value to your program in various ways. Programs should provide support both for accessing and applying for jobs leading to interviews and support for graduates after job placement or post-secondary school enrollment.

B. ALLOWABLE PROGRAM TYPES

These are examples of training models with evidence of effectiveness. It is not meant to be an exclusive or exhaustive list. If you have a program model that is a hybrid or unlike any of these models, you may propose it. Such models may need more explanation or evidence of efficacy than the following:

i. Occupational skills training provides individuals with the specific skills needed for a particular occupation. It should involve employers in development of curricula, work-based learning and interviewing graduates and include basic education and soft skills development as well as occupation-specific skills-building. Contextualized models which weave job-specific vocabulary, subjects, and processes into the development of technical or other “hard” job skills are desirable, particularly with populations who lack basic academic skills or English fluency.

Programs may include intensive ESOL or other basic education such as pre-HiSET instruction but this RFP will not fund stand-alone adult basic education programs that are not targeting job placement in a specific occupation or occupations.

ii. Transitional employment models incorporate job readiness instruction, paid employment, intensive case management and job training. The employment is typically structured as a contract between the service provider and the employer, or as a social enterprise conducted by the service provider. These models are generally used for populations lacking work experience or facing other significant barriers to employment. By definition, the outcome for a transitional employment program is placement into unsubsidized permanent employment.

iii. On the Job Training (OJT), like transitional employment, provides training through a job placement. One difference is that in OJT, the employer is expected to provide on-the-job training and ultimately to hire the individual on a permanent basis. Wages during the training period are typically shared between employer and service provider. Both OJT and transitional employment are expensive models; applicants are encouraged to find matching funds to cover some or all of the costs of subsidized wages for participants.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Vendors are expected to:

- Place at least 60% of all enrollees in a job at an average wage of at least Boston's living wage at \$14.11 per hour and retain that job for at least 30 days or;
- Place them in an education or training program leading to a full-time job with at least a \$14.11 per hour salary, and be enrolled in that program for at least 30 days.

Educational placements must have evidence of value or recognition in the particular economic sector leading to better opportunities for advancement. Specific payment terms will be negotiated with successful applicants, based on the overall costs of the program and the amount of award. OWD will ensure all costs are necessary and reasonable in approving awards and negotiating final terms.

If, because of your target population, you anticipate placement rates or wages below these levels, you must provide a clear and compelling explanation as to why these performance standards should not apply to your program.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

NJT grantees participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) E&T program of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). The NJT receives partial reimbursement from DTA for certain participants who receive SNAP benefits during training. These funds are put back into the Trust to fund future training programs. Skills training providers are expected to make referrals to DTA's SNAP program, keep SNAP

enrollment documents on file, and inform OWD of participants' SNAP status.

PROGRAM MONITORING/REPORTING

OWD will conduct site visits to monitor compliance and quality of services. This includes:

- Achievement of objectives in accordance with proposal and contract;
- Integrity of administrative systems and eligibility determination; and
- Quality of service evaluation through observation and informal interviews.

These monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities, operations and training activities. Participants not adequately documented as NJT-eligible will not count towards your outcome measure. Participant files must contain the following:

1. A copy of the participant's intake form and all eligibility documentation
2. Documentation of US employment authorization
3. All assessments
4. Individual Service Plan
5. Documentation of case management and support services
6. Resume and job search records
7. Record of attendance and documentation of activities where appropriate (workshop or activity attendance record, etc.)

OWD uses Google Docs for its NJT contracts. The Google Docs database is used for contractors to enter data, update client progress, and report outcomes. If your organization is unfamiliar with Google Docs, and you are selected for funding, OWD will provide training.

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to perform administrative responsibilities including: maintaining records of participant eligibility, attendance and progress; tracking participation; and submitting program reports and invoices in a timely manner.

IV. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please complete the sections below in no more than 15 pages.

I. Target Population

1. Describe the target population for your proposal's services. Describe the geographic location of potential participants, their demographics (such as age, race, gender, employment status). Explain this population's main assets for and barriers to employment. State the percentages of all participants for each of the targeted groups identified in this proposal. Explain why this population would be good candidates for training and eventually work in your target occupations.

II. Agency Background and Organizational Capacity

Briefly describe your organization's work over the past two years involving low-income or unemployed populations. Describe your experience and expertise in the following areas:

- Occupational skills training
- Job development and placement
- Counseling, case management, and post-placement services

Provide performance outcomes (enrollments and training-related job placements) for these services. Please provide a reference EDIC can contact regarding your organization's administrative capabilities.

III. Program Design

1. **Recruitment** - Describe your comprehensive recruitment strategy. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the target population and how to best engage that population. Include the specific groups and organizations who are outreach partners, and methods of conducting outreach. Explain how this strategy is appropriate for your target population and will allow you to meet your enrollment goal.
2. **Assessment**: Explain the process used to assess potential participants, the steps and tools involved, and how assessment protocol improves the service model. Explain how your assessment process is informed by your knowledge of the target population and/or employer input about industry needs. Describe how individuals not appropriate for this program are assisted to find services. Describe how the program informs potential participants about attendance, conduct, termination and other policies. .
3. **Case Management, Career Counseling and Support Services**: Describe your case

management strategy for program participants. How do you develop an individual service plan for each participant, and how is it updated? What kind of goals should the plan include? How do case managers address barriers to employment? What kinds of things do they track to identify or flag problems? Do you provide case management after a job or post-secondary placement? If a client has a need that is beyond your staff's expertise, how do you assist that person to get the help they need?

4. **Job Training:** Describe your job training. Discuss your goals, objectives and methods for instruction in occupational training. Describe the specific competencies that your trainees will master. Attach a syllabus or curriculum outline for each instructional component, sample lesson plans and a daily or weekly schedule of program activities. Please explain your approach to the integration of basic skills, computer skills, soft skills and vocational skills. Use examples from your curriculum to illustrate how students will learn or strengthen cognitive and technical skills in context.
5. **Job Development, Job Placement and Post-placement Services:** Describe how the program will educate students about careers, and teach them job search skills. Cited appropriate labor market information supporting your choice of targeted occupations. Discuss how you will prepare trainees for online job search and online applications. Provide a timeline for the process and timing of your job development, placement and retention activities. Discuss in detail how your relationship with an employer or employers will contribute to your success in these activities. Describe how you will provide job placement and higher education application support, and follow up on students post-job or post-secondary education placement.

IV. Employer Partnerships

1. Please describe your employer partnerships. Explain the specific roles and responsibilities of each employer partner and any formalized agreements you have with them for collaboration. **Please note: Training providers must have a Memorandum of Agreement with at least one employer.** This should include specific commitments that employer is making to assist the program.

V. Staffing

1. Please describe the staffing plan for the proposed initiative. Identify by name the staff members responsible for this program, briefly describing their experience and qualifications, as well as their roles and responsibilities. Identify the staff who will manage the participant tracking systems.

VI. Budget, Budget Narrative and Resources Leveraged (These do NOT count toward the 15 page limit.)

1. Budget forms: In your own format, give a detailed 12 month budget covering all aspects of the project. Include costs for all functions (recruitment, assessment, classroom and other instructional components, case management, job development and placement, client, tracking, oversight and administration, fiscal management and oversight, reporting).

2. Budget narrative: Prepare a budget narrative describing every line item and identifying clearly how each has been calculated. If you have other financial resources for this program, identify them, by source and amount, at the end of the budget narrative. Note: Funding request cannot exceed \$100,000.

V. TERMS OF PROCUREMENT

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Proposals must **be in one PDF received by email by 5:00PM on Friday, November 20, 2015**. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure their proposal is complete and submitted on time. Proposals not received by this time will be disqualified from the competitive process. Facsimiles, mailed, or hand-delivered applications will not be accepted. OWD will provide e-mail confirmation upon receipt. Proposals must be emailed to:

SUBMIT YOUR ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL TO:

Cindy Chow
Email: cindy.chow@boston.gov

LETTER OF INTENT

A letter of intent is strongly encouraged to help our planning process. Please send letters of intent by close of business on **November 4, 2015** via email to Cindy Chow at cindy.chow@boston.gov. Please complete the information using the form *Appendix A: Letter of Intent to Bid*. All applicants will receive email confirmation upon receipt. Should you subsequently decide not to submit, please let us know via email to Cindy Chow.

BIDDERS' CONFERENCE

Organizations interested in bidding on the RFP are strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled Bidders' Conference on **October 27, 2015**. Questions and answers provided at the Bidders' conference will be made available to the public on OWD website at www.owd.gov.

SUBMISSION OF INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing to Todd Lee, Senior Workforce and Policy Analyst, via email: todd.lee@boston.gov. Phone calls will not be accepted.

Responses to questions received during the procurement process will be posted on the OWD website at: www.owd.gov. It is the bidders' responsibility to check the website for updates and postings.

OWD is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants should ensure their proposals comply with the following requirements:

- A response to each section of the RFP is required and should follow the guidelines and sequences as specified in the Proposal Guideline section (Section IV). Each section should be labeled.
- Every section of the Request for Proposals should be completed in full. If funded, the proposal will provide the basis for contract negotiations, and final negotiated terms will be incorporated within the contract as the Statement of Work.
- Proposals should be typewritten, double-spaced, in 12-point font, printed single-sided with one-inch margins.
- The proposal narrative may not exceed 15 pages. The page limit does not include the one-page proposal cover sheet, budget forms, or any other required attachments.
- The final proposal should combine all the required forms, the narrative, and attachments **into one PDF document**.
- Contracts will be for a 12-month period. In issuing contracts, OWD makes no commitment to refunding, but reserves the right to refund programs based on the availability of funding, program performance, organizational capacity, administrative responsiveness, and service to target populations.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the proposal, congruence with the goals of this RFP, past program performance, geographic distribution of services, and service to the target population. Point values are allocated to each section of the proposal narrative as follows:

Proposal Cover Sheet	5 points
Target Population	10 points
Agency Background and Organizational Capacity	10 points
Program Design	40 points
Employer Partnerships	10 points
Staff	10 points
Budget, Budget Narrative and Resources Leveraged	15 points

These values are an evaluation tool; they do not dictate which proposals are ultimately recommended for funding. OWD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive or modify any requirement contained in this RFP, to amend without consult any proposal, and to effect any agreement deemed to be in the best interest of the city and its residents.

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

As a final step before submitting your application, use this checklist to ensure that your application is complete.

All organizations applying for NJT funds must complete and submit one electronic copy in one PDF FILE containing all of the following NJT documents:

- Proposal cover sheet
- Proposal narrative
- Budget narrative
- Program budget
- Syllabus and/or curriculum outline, sample lesson plan, and weekly program schedule
- Memorandum of agreement with at least one employer
- Copy of recent agency audit
- Copy of 501(c)(3) letter from IRS

Appendix A
Letter of Intent

If you intend to submit a proposal for this RFP, please notify OWD of such intent. Please complete the information below and return this form via e-mail to cindy.chow@boston.gov by **November 4, 2015 at 5:00 PM EST.** A letter of intent is strongly encouraged by OWD in order for us to plan for evaluation and reach decisions on funding efficiently. Should you subsequently decide not to submit, please let us know via email to Cindy Chow. All applicants will receive email confirmation upon receipt.

Name of Organization	
Organization Address, City, and Zip	
Executive Director	
Contact Person	Contact Person Title
Contact Phone Number	Contact E-Mail Address
Type of Service <i>(please describe in 2-3 sentences)</i>	

**Appendix B
Proposal Cover Sheet**

ORGANIZATION PROFILE		
Name of applicant organization		
EIN number		
Organization address and zip code		
Name of program		
Neighborhood of service delivery		
Executive Director's name		
Name and title of primary contact for the grant		
E-mail address and phone number of primary contact for the grant		
Total organizational budget	\$	
PROGRAM SUMMARY		
NJT funds requested (\$100,000 max): \$	Funding from other sources: \$	Total program cost: \$
Total number of <u>NJT</u> participants to be served:	Has applicant organization received funds from OWD (regardless of grant) in the past 24 months? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Target population and age range:		
Anticipated Outcome(s): <i>List up to 3 major outcomes for your program in number and percentage.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪ 	
Neighborhood(s) the <u>majority</u> of participants will come from:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Allston/Brighton <input type="checkbox"/> Back Bay/Beacon Hill <input type="checkbox"/> Charlestown <input type="checkbox"/> Chinatown <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown <input type="checkbox"/> Dorchester	<input type="checkbox"/> East Boston <input type="checkbox"/> Fenway-Kenmore <input type="checkbox"/> Hyde Park <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaica Plain <input type="checkbox"/> Mattapan <input type="checkbox"/> North End	<input type="checkbox"/> Roslindale <input type="checkbox"/> Roxbury/Mission Hill <input type="checkbox"/> South Boston <input type="checkbox"/> South End <input type="checkbox"/> West End <input type="checkbox"/> West Roxbury
PARTNERS <i>(add rows as needed)</i>		
Type/Role of Partner <i>(e.g. Employer)</i>	Organization Name	Contact Name

Appendix C
HUD 2015 Income Limits
Boston Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area

FAMILY SIZE	2015 INCOME LIMITS
1	\$48,800.00
2	\$55,800.00
3	\$62,750.00
4	\$69,700.00
5	\$75,300.00
6	\$80,900.00
7	\$86,450.00
8	\$92,050.00