

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Youth FY 2018

ISSUE DATE	February 1, 2017
BIDDER'S CONFERENCE	February 7, 2017 10:00am-12:00pm At City Hall BPDA Board Room, 9 th Floor
LETTER OF INTENT DUE Strongly encouraged but not mandatory	March 10, 2017 BY: 5:00PM EST
PROPOSALS DUE	March 15, 2017 BY: 5:00PM EST

43 HAWKINS STREET | BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS | FEBRUARY 2017

OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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Mayor's Office of

**WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**



CITY OF BOSTON

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

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RFP TIMELINE

Request for Proposals Issued Website: owd.boston.gov	February 1, 2017
Bidder's Conference City Hall, BPDA Board Room, 9 th Floor	February 7, 2017 10:00am-12:00pm
Letter of Intent Due (strongly encouraged but not mandatory) Email: cindy.chow@boston.gov	March 10, 2017 by 5:00 PM
Submittal of Questions Email: stefanie.oshea@boston.gov	March 10, 2017 by 5:00 PM
Response to RFP Due Website: owd.boston.gov	March 15, 2017 by 5:00 PM
Anticipated Contract Start Date	July 1, 2017

Section I. OVERVIEW

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 leading to greater economic security. These services include education and training, career development, job training, adult basic education, and youth employment services. One such funding source is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

OWD is Boston's administrative entity for WIOA Youth funds, which are overseen by the Youth Council and the Boston Workforce Development Board, which are staffed by the Boston Private Industry Council.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) solicits competitive proposals for services to eligible youths under WIOA. As a division of the Boston Planning and Development Agency, OWD will handle all questions concerning this RFP, review all submissions, and prepare funding recommendations.

THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT¹

In July 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was enacted, replacing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The Act "is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy."²

While WIOA maintains the goal of assisting individuals to find and retain jobs through provisions of employment training, education, and support services, there are some key changes under the WIOA Title I Youth Services. These include: increasing the percentage of funds to be spent on out-of-school youth from 30% to 75%, extending the out-of-school age limit from 21 to 24 years, and streamlining the process for documenting eligibility. In addition, under the new Act, 20% of funds must be spent on work experiences.

In view of these key changes, OWD will continue to focus its FY 2018 priorities on programs employing career pathways and work experience as leading approaches for workforce activities. In addition, OWD intends to align with the new Act by prioritizing services to out-of-school youth between the ages of 16-24 years.

¹ For more information on WIOA please visit: www.doleta.gov/WIOA/

² Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>

PRIORITIES FOR WIOA YOUTH FUNDING

The priorities for funding in this RFP were developed through a planning process conducted over the past several months. A draft statement of policy principles was issued for comment on the OWD website in December of 2016 with the opportunity to comment until January 13, 2017³; the final policy principles can be found on the OWD website: owd.boston.gov.

For FY 2018, in line with WIOA outcomes, OWD will prioritize programs and services that focus on long-term outcomes in career readiness and success including the following performance measures:

- Employment or post-secondary enrollment at 6 and 12 months after program completion
- Median wages at 6 months after program completion; and
- Employer retention at 6 and 12 months after program completion.

OWD will continue to give preference to programs that establish a framework to move participating youth along the career pathways continuum, defined as high school diploma, HiSET or GED attainment, matriculation into post-secondary education/training, and placement into jobs with demonstrated career paths. OWD has developed a visual of this “pathway,” which can be found in Appendix C.

Preference will be given to programs employing a career pathway model, with a structured sequence of activities that focuses on providing participating youth long-term career development services that lead to unsubsidized employment in growing industries with the potential for wage progression. Programs that provide seamless connection and transition between different components of a career pathway model that increase employability for participating youth will be prioritized. Applicants must demonstrate how each participant will advance from one level to the next in the career pathways continuum. In addition, under this RFP, partnerships and collaborations are strongly encouraged to allow provision of a full set of workforce strategies, education, and training, and intensive case management services for participating youth.

Applicants successfully integrating the required program components that include employment, training, and education programs have a greater chance of being funded.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

At the issuance of this RFP, OWD has not been informed by the U.S. Department of Labor of the allocation of WIOA Title I Youth funds for Fiscal Year 2018. The total allocation for the current contracts (FY 2015) is approximately \$1.2 million.

³ No comments were received and therefore no changes were made to the Policy Principles

OWD is aware that there are not enough funds to support all efforts to provide a continuum of services based on a career pathways model – so under this RFP, OWD strives to optimize the use of our diminishing grant resources⁴ by awarding larger grants to a smaller number of successful applicants. While this will result in fewer grants distributed than at present, we believe this change will increase capacity in priority programs we fund to provide the highest quality programs for participants and bring services to scale at a lower cost.

OWD does not predetermine the amount of funds to be dedicated toward each program model. The type and quality of proposals submitted will determine the funds awarded. Open and competitive procurement typically occurs on a two-year cycle. Contracts resulting from this RFP are anticipated to commence July 1, 2017 and end on June 30, 2018. Contracts are awarded for a one-year period, and a re-funding process determines the second year of funding. Re-funding for FY 2019 will be contingent upon satisfactory program performance, approval of a re-funding application, and the availability of federal funding.

Section II: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This is an open and competitive procurement process. Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Hold 501(c)(3) status under the Internal Revenue Code, be in the process of receiving such status, or have an identified fiscal sponsor holding 501(c)(3).

In addition, OWD is interested in organizations with the following competencies:

- OWD gives priority to organizations with a track record of providing services to low-income youth in Boston while maintaining high standards of program management and accountability. Preference will be given to community-based organizations that are physically located in Boston. OWD gives priority to proposals that focus on long-term outcomes in career readiness and success such as long-term career development services and training programs that lead to unsubsidized employment in growing industries with wage progression. Capacity to move clients to recognized postsecondary credentials, such as an associate's degree or an industry-recognized postsecondary

⁴ In FY 2017, Boston received a 19% cut in WIOA-Youth funding. WIOA is a formula grant, taking into account the number of unemployed individuals and the number of disadvantaged youth. Boston's current unemployment rate is 3.1% and Massachusetts's is 3.3% (as of September 2016) well below the national rate of 4.9%.

training certificate will be a priority.

- OWD gives priority to proposals that incorporate partnerships and collaborations under this RFP. Partnerships focusing on a seamless integration of programs and services are strongly encouraged to ensure that there are no gaps in the continuum of programs and services. Partnerships are urged to include a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including but are not limited to employers, institutions of higher education, one-stop career centers, adult basic education providers, and community-based organizations. To that extent, OWD encourages applicants to partner and clearly define each partner’s strengths, roles, and responsibilities under this RFP. Each applicant may apply as the lead applicant for only one proposal, but may budget funds towards the partners services. Applicants may be members of more than one partnership under this RFP.

Examples of partnerships include:

- HiSET or diploma program partner with a local community college to provide academic college bridging, college enrollment support and persistence coaching after the youth receives the credential
- A HiSET or diploma program partners with a career center or experienced employment agency to provide youth with employment services for youth during the program and/or after graduation.
- Career exploration or pre-apprenticeship program partners with an apprenticeship or occupational skills training program to create a supported pathway through both programs.

Applicants successfully incorporating partnerships and collaborations will likely be funded at the higher amount if awarded this grant.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

All participants served with WIOA Youth funds under this procurement must meet all of the following eligibility characteristics⁵:

Out-of-School Youth Eligibility ⁶	In-School Youth Eligibility ⁷
a) Resident of Boston; b) U.S. Right to Work Documentation; c) Selective Service registration for males 18 and older;	a) Resident of Boston; b) U.S. Right to Work Documentation; c) Selective Service registration for males 18 and older;

⁵ Because age eligibility is based on age at enrollment, participants may continue to receive services beyond the age of 24 once they are enrolled in the program

⁶ Retrieved from: <http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/docs/issuances/wioa-policy/19-101-1a.pdf>

⁷ Taken directly from Section 129 (a)(1):Youth participant eligibility. Retrieved from: <http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/docs/issuances/wioa-policy/19-101-1a.pdf>

<p>d) Not attending any school (as defined under State law);</p> <p>e) Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment. Because age eligibility is based on age at enrollment, participants may continue to receive services beyond the age of 24 once they are enrolled in the program; and</p> <p>c) One or more of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A school dropout; 2) A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner; 3) An offender; 4) A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway; 5) In foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act 6) Pregnant or parenting; 7) An individual with a disability; 8) A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. 	<p>d) Attending school (as defined by State law⁸);</p> <p>e) Not younger than age 14 or (unless an individual with a disability who is attending school under State law) older than age 21; and</p> <p>f) Low-income</p> <p>g) One or more of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Basic skills deficient; 2) An English language learner; 3) An offender; 4) A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway; 5) In foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act or in an out-of-home placement; 6) Pregnant or parenting; 7) An individual with a disability; or 8) An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.
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In addition, under WIOA, “low-income” also includes a youth living in in a high-poverty area; a homeless individual; foster child; or receiving SNAP, SSI or income-based public assistance. A high-poverty area is defined as: a Census tract, a set of contiguous Census tracts, Indian Reservation, tribal land, or Native Alaskan Village or county that has a poverty rate of at least 25 percent as set every 5 years using American Community Survey 5-Year data.

PRIORITY TARGET POPULATIONS

Within the above eligibility requirements under WIOA, the PIC and OWD have determined the following priority target populations under this RFP. As stated earlier, the new WIOA prioritizes serving more out-of-school youth by requiring that 75% of funds go to that population.

⁸ Please note that alternative education is not applicable under this definition

- Out-of-school youth between the ages of 16-24 years old.
- In-school youth between the ages of 14-21 years old.
- Court-involved; homeless or runaway; in foster care, or aged out of the foster care system; pregnant or parenting; youth with disability; young men of color; documented immigrant youth.
- Low-income youth who are: basic-skills deficient or English Language Learners, residing in Boston Housing Authority (BHA) facilities, in secondary or post-secondary schools with a GPA less than 2.0, living in a single parent household, truant, residing in high poverty area, or failed the MCAS in the most recent round.
- Individuals with disabilities who are in need of pre-employment transition services including job exploration, work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, instruction in self-advocacy, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary education programs, and instruction in self-advocacy with the purpose of maximizing opportunities for competitive, integrated employment.

Section III: WIOA REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply to all youth service providers funded under WIOA. OWD seeks proposals articulating collaborations with other agencies in order to generate access to an appropriate range of services for participating youth. Proposals are expected to demonstrate capacity to fulfill all service requirements, but may do so through partnerships.

Out-of-School Youth

OWD continues to require that, at minimum, 75% of funds serve out-of-school youth; this is specific to this proposal and not a state or federal requirement for WIOA. For the definition of out-of-school youth, please refer back to Section II.

Work Experience

OWD continues to require that 20% of the funds must be spent on work experiences. This includes paid or unpaid work experiences, such as summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities. These work experience strategies must serve as a next step in career development, whether the desired outcome is employment, or enrollment in advanced training or post-secondary education.

Mandatory Program Elements

Funded programs must be able to provide, either in-house, through collaboration with other organizations (which may or may not be a WIOA-funded provider), or through referral, access to the 14 elements of youth services required under WIOA. Applicants must demonstrate how

all 14 required program elements will be made available to participating youth as needed using Appendix I 'WIOA Service Elements'.

1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction	Development of educational achievement skills that leads to the completion of the requirements for a secondary or post-secondary school diploma/credential.
2. Alternative Secondary School	Alternative secondary school services, or drop out recovery services.
3. Work Experience	Work experiences which include summer employment, year round employment, pre-apprenticeship, internships/Job-Shadow and On-the-job training opportunities.
4. Occupational Skills Training	An organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields.
5. Education concurrently w/Workforce Prep	Integrated education and training that occur concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation.
6. Leadership Development	Opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination and other positive social behaviors.
7. Supportive Services	Services that enable youth to participate in program activities such as assistance with book, fees, school supplies, transportation, and legal aid services.
8. Adult Mentoring (12 months min)	Participants receive adult mentoring for a period of not less than 12 months that connects to the youth's goals.
9. Follow-up Services (12 months)	Follow-up services are provided for 12 months unless the participant cannot be located or contacted.
10. Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling	Individualized counseling which includes drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs.

11. Financial Literacy Education	Support the ability of participants to create budgets, learn how to manage spending, credit, and debt.
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training	Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business.
13. Labor Market Services	Participants receive access to career counseling, career exploration, career awareness, and the use of labor market tools.
14. Transition to Post-Secondary Education	Participants receive access to job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, instruction in self-advocacy, work readiness training.

Required Sequence of Services

Programs funded through this RFP are required to provide the following five required sequence of services in order to ensure that all participants receive comprehensive and individualized services consistent with the WIOA requirements. Additional information on each of these services is included in Appendix F.

- Outreach and Recruitment
- Intake and Eligibility Determination
- Assessment and Referral
- Case Management and Individual Service Strategy Development
- Access to a Range of Services
- Follow-Up Services

Section IV: SERVICES REQUESTED

OWD seeks proposals for programs best demonstrating the capacity to provide access to career-oriented employment through the provision of services based on a career pathway model. All funded services should be offered in the context of a comprehensive service strategy designed to address individual employment and education needs.

The goal of this RFP aligns with the city-wide economic opportunity agenda that aims to tackle income inequality for Bostonians. OWD defines a career pathway continuum as an effort that provides a clear sequence of activities and a connection between high school credentials, post-secondary education or training enrollment, and employment programs that lead to careers with living wages. A career pathway allows participants to progress from one level to the next

to build skills that lead to improved career prospects. Career pathways prepare and place individuals into jobs in high-demand and high-wage industries with increased earning opportunities by providing industry-recognized credentials, certificates, and degrees.

Preference will be given to programs that provide seamless connection and transition between different components of a career pathway model: alternative education, post-secondary education/training, and employment programs. Applicants must demonstrate how each component is connected to one another that increases employability for participating youth.

Under this RFP, OWD seeks innovative models or approaches which respond to the needs of target populations and employers in today's changing economy. Applicants must demonstrate how they intend to transition youth into post-secondary education/training and/or employment. Applicants must demonstrate clear transition strategies for youth that help them on a path toward economic security. Described below are allowable program types under the career pathways continuum:

1. *Employment:* Employment programs can include occupational skills training, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship, career exploration, job readiness/soft skills development, and work experience that provide maximum opportunities for youth to learn theoretical and practical skills relevant to their career interests. These programs provide an understanding of career options within a given industry, developing industry-relevant work-based readiness skills and employment competencies, and working to connect youth with next steps resulting in post-secondary education, training, and/or employment. Employment programs should be grounded in a comprehensive assessment of each participant's employment history, experience, as well as career interests, skills, and abilities. Assessments should be used to create a career goal that generates quality job matching, wage progression, and career ladder opportunities.

In addition, employment programs must demonstrate a strong connection to the next steps in career development for participating youth. For example, a pre-apprenticeship program must demonstrate connection to an apprenticeship program; career exploration must demonstrate the capacity to facilitate the transition to employment or post-secondary education/training, depending on the goals of individual participants.

Occupational skills training: Occupational skills training programs must target jobs in industries that align with labor market workforce needs with projected growth and demand in Boston. Occupational skills programs result in the mastery of technical skills required for employment and the attainment of employer-recognized certification that is portable. Entry-level jobs are characterized by low to moderate starting wages, but also provide emerging career ladders with wage progression. Applicants may utilize contextual learning strategy designed to develop basic and occupational skills simultaneously, thereby

facilitating job placement and retention. Programs must work with local employers or training providers to train a strong pipeline of skilled workers.

Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship program: Apprenticeships allow participants to “earn while they learn,” giving them an opportunity both for advancing wages and opportunities to learn a higher level of skills in their chosen craft or profession. OWD supports apprenticeships that are registered with the Commonwealth and those that have access to matriculation agreement with post-secondary institutions to allow apprentices to gain credits towards certification and/or degree completion.

Work experience: Work experience provides structured opportunities for youth to learn and engage in career opportunities that incorporate education and employment activities. This can take the form of unpaid and paid experiences, summer and year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.

Career exploration: Career exploration programs provide youth with structured opportunities to explore a range of career options in a particular industry, thereby developing work-readiness, industry-relevant competencies and an ability to engage in informed career planning according to their interests and aptitudes. Programs must target career fields in high-growth and high-demand industries in Boston and should demonstrate the capacity to facilitate the transition to employment, training, and post-secondary education, depending on the goals of individual participants. Applicants must have a clearly identified partnerships with employers or training providers within the industry who are willing to help develop these opportunities.

Job readiness and soft skills: Employment programs include development of job readiness and soft skills. Under this RFP, job readiness and soft skills development are encouraged to complement the technical skills component. Soft skills components may include but are not limited to interpersonal skills such as teamwork, communication, and punctuality to better equip youth with non-cognitive skills needed to succeed in jobs. Job readiness components may include resume preparation, job search, and interviewing skills.

- 2. Post-Secondary Education/Training.*** Post-secondary education/training programs can include two- and four-year community colleges and universities, occupational skills training, and apprenticeship programs. These programs provide individuals with credentials, certificates, and degrees necessary to pursue a career. Applicants must demonstrate a strong connection between the provision of post-secondary education/training and available jobs with a living wage.

Post-secondary education: For post-secondary education, applicants must outline strategies that help youth to pursue, enroll, persist, and complete post-secondary education programs. OWD understands that post-secondary education can take more than two years

for target populations to complete. OWD is interested in seeing proposals that not only provide opportunities for individuals to enroll in post-secondary education, but also provide supportive services that help them persist and complete the program.

Post-secondary bridge programs: OWD expects youth participants under the post-secondary education/training pillar to have completed at least a secondary credential, either a high school diploma, HiSET or GED. However, many high school graduates still require basic academic skills remediation. Applicants should demonstrate how services are tailored so people with disparate academic levels can successfully transition from training into employment or post-secondary education within the planned program duration.

In addition, for certain populations, such as out-of-school youth or English Language Learners, bridge programs can also be included as part of the career pathways continuum to accelerate credentials and skills building, but generic, stand-alone bridge programs unconnected to employment and/or post-secondary education/training will not be considered responsive to this RFP.

One example of effective post-secondary bridge programs is the use of contextualized and integrated curriculum and instruction designed to accelerate credentials and skill building. Skills are developed in an applied context, where classroom lessons draw examples from related occupational skills training or employment experiences. Contextualized learning provides maximum opportunity for students to learn new skills relevant to their career interests.

Occupational Skills training: See description under “Employment.”

Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship program: See description under “Employment.”

- 3. Alternative Education:** Alternative education programs include HiSET, GED or diploma granting programs. Program designs must demonstrate comprehensive service strategies to meet the wide array of needs posed by participating youth. Responsive program designs will articulate specific supportive services for targeted populations, such as access to court advocacy, housing, mental health services, health care, food, and clothing. These services may be provided by the program’s case management staff, or through collaboration with other agencies which may be connected with particular youth. Effective program designs should produce academic outcomes which demonstrate learning gain such as grade level advancement and attainment of a diploma, HiSET or GED.

In addition, applicants under this program model should provide a strong school-to-career/college framework. Providing an early introduction and exposure to post-secondary education and careers, allowing youth to establish career goals and interests, and to experience improved educational and employment outcomes, such as dual enrollment

strategies are encouraged. A post-secondary bridge strategy, such as remedial/developmental class preparation, which allows youth to take college level courses upon entry into community colleges, is also encouraged.

For participating youth, especially out-of-school youth, diploma, HiSET or GED attainment is a top priority, but service strategies must reach beyond high school credential attainment to support youth entry into post-secondary education/training, or into employment that will lead to economic security. Collaboration with employers and/or higher education institution is encouraged to emphasize career planning and access to post-secondary options for youth. Applicants must demonstrate clear transitional strategies into post-secondary education/training and/or employment for participating youth, which are described above.

Each program type must be connected but be non-duplicative. Applicants must demonstrate how each participant will advance from one level to the next. Services requested in this section are not in a chronological order or in order of importance. In addition, applicants are not required to incorporate every component listed in this section (i.e. occupational training programs will not need to show alternative education component if the clients will already need to have high school diploma, HiSET or GED in order to enroll in a program).

REQUIRED PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Successful applicants will articulate a service strategy and program design that is consistent with the following required program components:

- 1. *Career pathways continuum structure.*** Applicants must describe in their proposal a clear career pathways continuum (and include a diagram as an attachment), indicating what services will be provided and by whom, including education, training, employment, and provision of intensive case management services. Career pathways must identify specific steps of activities that lead to placement into jobs or post-secondary education/training. Career pathways must provide clear advancement opportunities and transitions for participating youth. Applicants must demonstrate partnerships with educational institutions or employers to develop specific activities and strategies to connect education, training, and employment activities for participating youth. For post-secondary education/training and employment programs, the description must include specific job(s) that program participants are expected to obtain upon successful completion of a pathway. For alternative education programs, the description must include how a career pathways continuum is providing a strong school to career/college framework.
- 2. *Intake, eligibility determination, assessment, individual service strategy development, participation in program service elements.*** Please see Appendix F.
- 3. *Employer partners.*** Applicants must demonstrate a strong employer or training provider partnerships. Program participants will benefit from a first-hand understanding of the

requirements and expectations of employers in a given industry. Partnerships between employers and providers should be built on the premise that the proposed program will benefit employers by developing the job readiness and industry-specific employment skills of potential employees, and by providing a more informed and motivated applicant pool.

Applicants must demonstrate partnership designs that offer employers the opportunity for direct interaction with individual participants and direct coordination with program staff. Youth may be placed in summer jobs or internships with local businesses and employers, while other employers may participate as job-shadow hosts and mentors for youth. Applicants are encouraged to include innovative and sustainable employer partnerships in their program design. These partnerships must lead to post-secondary education/training and/or job placements for participating youth. Applicants must attach a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with at least one employer partner/training providers. Proposals without strong employer/training provider involvement will not be competitive. If a program does not have expertise in employer relationships, partnership with a program that does have this expertise is encouraged.

- 4. *Partnership plan.*** A strong partnership is critical for this RFP to deliver the effective services that will have the greatest possible collective impact. Applicants must establish a plan that clearly identifies which organization is providing which service for program participants, including alternative education, post-secondary education, training, employment, and provision of intensive case management programs, and/or job placement and retention services. Partnerships can include but are not limited to employers, higher education institutions, and other community-based organizations with expertise in serving the target population.
- 5. *Connect youth to work experiences.*** Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to provide work experience programs, such as unpaid and paid work experiences, summer and year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training that serve as the next steps in career development, whether the desired outcome is employment or enrollment in advanced training or higher education.

WIOA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS⁹

Because WIOA emphasizes education/training, skill development, career development and economic self-sufficiency in integrated, individualized plans, programs should include how they will demonstrate the following gains and improvements as well as how they will support retention outcomes at 6 and 12 months after program completion:

⁹ The U.S. Department of Labor has notified OWD that the new WIOA performance measures will go into effect in FY 2017.

Placement in Employment, Post-Secondary Education, or Advanced Training

- Number and percentage of participants who gain employment.
- Number and percentage of participants who enroll in post-secondary education, including community colleges and universities.
- Number and percentage of participants who enroll in advanced training.
- Employment or post-secondary enrollment at 6 and 12 months after program completion.
- Employer retention at 6 and 12 months after program completion.

Credential Attainment

- Number and percentage of participants who obtain post-secondary degrees; or
- Number and percentage of participants who obtain high school diploma, HiSET or GED, credentials and industry-recognized certificates; and:
 - Enroll in post-secondary education, or
 - Enroll in advanced training or
 - Gain employment.

Skill Gain

- Number and percentage of participants who increase one or more Educational Functioning Levels.
- Attain a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Earn passing grades on a transcript or report card for one year.
- Satisfactory progress toward an established milestone.
- Earn an occupational exam.

Median Wages

- Of youth employed, median wage in the second quarter post program.
- Median wages at 6 months after program completion.

Employer Retention

Of those exiters who are employed in the 2nd quarter after exit AND in the 4th quarter after exit, those that are employed with the same employer in both quarters (using the employer FEIN from wage records).

DATA TRACKING AND REPORTING

The Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) is a web-based, state-managed database system that supports statewide employment programs. The successful applicants will be required to use MOSES to record and track all participant activities, including services rendered and outcomes achieved. Reports generated from MOSES will be used to assess program performance. Funded providers are required to designate two users and attend a

three-day MOSES training and be certified by DCS in order to access the database. Providers are also required to attend a one-day case management training. In addition, the contractor may be asked to provide additional data not accessible through MOSES to evaluate performance outcomes.

Contracting agencies must be capable of accessing the Internet and have access to a desktop computer to access the MOSES database securely. We suggest strongly that the computer accessing MOSES be capable of displaying data 800x600. Communication speed must be equal to or better than a DSL communication link. OWD will provide you with the necessary software to affect the hookup through OWD to the state system. Each funded organization is also expected to provide its own anti-virus protection.

PROGRAM REPORTING AND MONITORING

OWD program management personnel will conduct periodic site visits to monitor the following:

- Compliance with regulations, policies, and contracts;
- Operations in accordance with the proposal and the contract;
- Achievement of objectives in accordance with the proposal and the contract;
- Integrity of administrative and data systems;
- Quality of service evaluation through observation and informal interviews; and
- Need for technical assistance or corrective action.

These monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities and operations. 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.

FINANCIAL REPORTING AND MONITORING

Site visits will also be used to monitor financial compliance with WIOA Youth and other applicable regulations.

If your agency expended \$750,000 or more in federal financial assistance, from any and all funding sources during the most recent audit period, you are required to have an audit prepared in accordance with the most recent guidance from the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This guide, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards* (Uniform Guidance or "UG"), replaces OMB Circular A-133. The complete text of this audit guidance can be found at 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F in the Code of Federal Regulations. A complete copy of the UG-compliant audit report must be submitted, along with a copy of any management letter (if one exists). Agencies subject to the Uniform

Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report (UFR) filing requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts may use the UFR format.

If you expended less than \$750,000 in federal funds, and are exempt from the UG audit requirements, a statement attesting to that fact must accompany your audited financial statements.

If you expended less than \$750,000 in federal funds, but are subject to the UFR filing requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, then you should submit a complete copy of your agency's UFR.

Applicants are encouraged to share this information with appropriate fiscal staff to ensure that the audit report submission is available for review by OWD during fiscal site visits. Proposals that do not contain a complete audit report submission will be considered incomplete.

V. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please complete and include the Proposal Cover Sheet provided in Appendix D. This does not count towards the 20 page limit. Items #1 to #8 below do count toward the 20-page limit.

1. One-Page Proposal Summary (5 points)

Briefly describe your proposed program, including specific target population, number of participants to be served and those who will be funded by WIOA, program site(s), type of program and duration of services, expected WIOA outcomes, amount of funds requested, cost per participant, and other key features of your program. Identify any partners with whom you will collaborate to offer key components of the program design.

2. Agency Background and Organizational Capacity (10 points)

- Briefly describe your agency's overall history and its previous experience in providing the specific services proposed.
- Describe your experience and expertise in any or all of the critical components of career pathways: employment, post-secondary education/training, and/or alternative education.
- Include information about your partnership, briefly describing each partner's roles and responsibilities under this RFP – indicate your partnership's positive impact on your service to target populations in the past, if applicable.
- Provide a description of your organization's track record in the service you are proposing. Include size of service population and any performance outcomes, including

alternative education, post-secondary education/training credential achievement, and/or job placement and retention.

3. Statement of Need and Target Population (10 points)

Please describe the characteristics and needs of the specific populations you intend to serve, assuming the reader is unfamiliar with the population. Describe the target population's barriers in accessing employment and education services. How will the proposed program address those barriers? If more than one group is targeted, provide information for each group. How does this population differ from the general population? What direct experience have you had with members of this population and how did you accommodate their needs? Which aspects of your program (e.g. curriculum, program environment, facilities...etc) are designed specifically to address the challenges faced by this population? Include data supporting your agency's ability to achieve successful outcomes with the target group.

4. Program Design (25 points)

Describe in detail your proposed design for offering each of the following components. Explain how these functions, as designed, are appropriate for your target population and its needs.

Every applicant is required to pick one primary model from numbers (i), (ii), or (iii). Every applicant must respond to questions outlined in (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) which address the essential components of a career pathway model.

i. Employment

- Describe your employment programs, which can include occupational skills training, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, work experience, career exploration, and job readiness or soft skills components.
- Describe how your program is providing opportunities for youth to learn theoretical skills relevant to their career interests.
- Identify the specific positions for which your training will prepare participants.
- How will programs educate participants about a range of occupations and career pathways in a given industry, and the required experience, education, and training necessary for such occupations?
- Describe the basic academic skill levels, educational credentials, and technical skills typically required for these positions. Discuss your methods for instruction. Discuss your methods for instructions for job readiness and soft skills development. Discuss how you will develop goals and measure individual competencies in each of these areas.
- How will your program support transition into unsubsidized employment? Describe how program staff will provide youth with ongoing support in employment search, employment retention and/or assistance in transitional services. What resources will be utilized in this effort?
- How will staff facilitate career planning for participants with CORI or other barriers?

ii. Post-secondary education/training

- Describe your education/training programs, which can include occupational skills training, apprenticeship program, post-secondary bridge programs, and/or post-secondary education. Describe how your proposed education/training programs will lead to jobs with livable wages.
- Identify the specific positions for which your training will prepare participants. Identify the specific certificates, credentials or degrees your program will prepare participants obtain upon successful completion of your program. Describe the basic academic skill levels, educational credentials, and technical skills typically required for the positions. Describe your methods for instructions.
- How will staff conduct job development for participants who are interested in pursuing options outside of the industry? For participants with criminal histories? Provide a timeline that describes the process and timing of your job development and placement activities.
- What role have employers and/or representatives of higher education play in the development of your program design?
- Describe any post-secondary bridge programs to meet the needs of the target population and how they are providing opportunities for youth to build credentials and skills. For applicants offering post-secondary education, what strategies will your program employ that help youth to pursue, enroll, persist, and complete post-secondary education? For applicants offering occupational training, how will your program facilitate placement in and support retention in employment?
- How are your services tailored so youth can successfully transition from your program into employment or post-secondary education within the planned program duration?
- How will staff facilitate career planning for participants with CORI or other barriers?

iii. Alternative education

- Describe your alternative education program and how your program is helping target populations obtain a diploma, HiSET or GED. Does the program have a minimum grade level? What is the typical range of grade levels in your classroom(s)? What proportion of students typically have had IEPs?
- How does your program meet the needs of the range of students in your classroom(s)?
- How has the curriculum been developed and updated to align with MA Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core standards? For diploma granting programs, what particular methods are taken to prepare youth to pass the MCAS?
- How does the program design reflect a school to career/college approach? What role have employers and/or representatives of higher education play in the development of your curriculum? How are your service strategies reaching beyond the diploma, HiSET or GED completion to support youth admission to and persistence in post-secondary education/training or into employment? What specific strategies is your program using

in order to successfully transition youth into post-secondary education/training and/or employment?

a) *Career pathways continuum structure:*

- Describe your career pathways continuum structure, including what services will be provided for program participants, whether it is alternative education, post-secondary education/training, and/or employment. Describe specific strategies that connect different components of a career pathway continuum to increase employability for participating youth. Discuss specific strategies your program will use in order to successfully transition youth from one level to the next. Include a graphic illustration of your career pathways continuum model.
- For post-secondary education/training and/or employment programs, what are the specific job title(s) (with wages) that program participants might obtain upon successful completion of your pathway? Cite appropriate labor market information supporting your choice of targeted occupations. What is the economic significance of sector(s) to the regional economy? What are advancement opportunities for your choice of targeted occupations/sectors?

b) *Program design:* Briefly describe all key components and special features of your program design, including proposed program schedule, duration, intensity, and location of each component and staff to participant ratios. Discuss attendance, termination, and code of conduct policies, and how these are communicated to staff and participants. Describe the methods to improve participation retention and motivation, demonstrating effectiveness where possible.

c) *Employer partner:* Discuss how the program has engaged industry employer(s) and/or training providers in the development and delivery of a program design/curriculum which prepares youth for careers. Describe the nature of the organization's employer partnerships, and describe any plans to develop new partnerships or strengthen existing relationships. Attach a Memorandum of Agreement with at least one employer.

d) *Partnership plan.* Describe in detail the ways in which your partnership will contribute to the success of your program. Clearly define the roles and activities of the partner organizations. Attach a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Letter of Support between your organization and each of the partners outlining the responsibilities and contributions of partner organizations. The MOA/Letter of Support must be signed by the CEO of each organization or a designee who has senior operational authority.

e) *Work experience.* Describe how your program is incorporating work experience programs to provide opportunities for youth to gain work experience. Indicate what workplace related materials, supplies, and equipment will be used. Describe the balance between classroom-based activities and work experience opportunities.

f) Youth with disabilities. Briefly describe your program's current capacity to support youth with disabilities, especially hidden or non-apparent disabilities. What are your staffs' qualifications to serve this population? What is your current practice for identifying and addressing hidden disabilities? What, if any, kind of instructional or assistive technology do you have? If you do not have capacity to serve students with disabilities, what are your plans to do so going forward?

5. WIOA Required Framework Services (15 points)

These common services form a core structure for a participant’s involvement in the WIOA system. For each of the steps outlined, explain how your program design will fulfill the expectations of the WIOA system.

Outreach and Recruitment	Discuss your plan for recruitment, including the specific target group you will recruit, the neighborhoods they live in, the organizations and audiences with which you will communicate, and the tools and methods you will use. How large a pool of recruits will you need to bring into your intake process in order to identify the cohort of enrolled participants you propose to serve? Discuss plans for the recruitment and enrollment of out-of-school youth.
Intake and Eligibility Determination	Describe the intake process, including the collection of basic information from potential clients, informing potential clients of available services in your organization or elsewhere, and determination of client suitability for program services. Describe the process of determining eligibility for WIOA funded services and which staff are responsible for this process.
Assessment and Referral	Describe how your assessment process provides an objective assessment of each youth participants and includes a review of academic and occupational skills levels, as well as service needs and strengths, for each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants and informing the individual service strategies. Include a description of any tools or methods used to determine the following: levels of basic skills, occupational skills, work readiness skills, prior work experience, employability, interests and aptitudes, and supportive service needs. How will you ensure that academic assessment is conducted quarterly and that students perform to the best of their ability? Provide a plan to incorporate academic instruction tailored to student needs, particularly for those assessed below the 9 th grade level in reading or math. If it is determined that the program does

	not match the particular needs of the individual, how is that individual referred to more appropriate services?
Case Management/ Individual Service Strategy (ISS)	<p>Describe your program’s capacity to develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy based on the needs of each youth participant that is directly linked to one or more indicators of performance, that describes a career pathway that includes education and employment goals, that considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment and that prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participants. Describe how the Individual Service Strategy¹⁰ will be used to document services for each participant and to measure progress toward attaining goals. What steps will be taken to ensure that the ISS is an active document that reflects a client’s progress, evolving goals, and service needs? Describe how your program will incorporate trauma-informed approaches into their case management models?</p> <p>Describe how program staff will provide youth with ongoing support in employment search, and/or assistance in applying for advanced training or higher education.</p>
Access to a Range of Services	In order to provide individual youth with access to a broad range of services, or the required 14 elements, WIOA necessitates the formation of a system of services and providers. Please discuss how the program is able to provide, either in-house, through collaboration, or through referral mechanisms, access to each of the 14 WIOA service elements including how the program will support participants in achieving skills gain. Please use attachment I to identify how the program will provide these services and attach any relevant MOAs with partners.
Follow-up Services	Describe how your program proposes to provide at least 12 months of follow-up services to participants completing program services as well as participants who may have dropped out of the program, but need additional services. Programs are encouraged to consider the needs and barriers of the program’s target population in determining the appropriate levels and types of follow-up services. Follow-up services may be included in your budget.

6. Staffing and Facilities (10 points)

Identify staff responsible for each component of the proposed program, including direct services and administrative personnel. Discuss staff qualifications, skills, and experience

¹⁰ To see the current ISS form, please refer to Appendix G.

working effectively with youth and implementing the proposed services. Identify the staff who will manage MOSES.

Discuss your agency's overall staffing and management structure, and the extent to which this adequately supports program operations and goal attainment. Describe the facilities that will be used including location of classes and other services, total square footage of site, accessibility to persons with disabilities, and any and all equipment or resources that will be available to youth.

7. Outcomes (10 points)

Provide anticipated outcomes for services described. Applicants must clearly indicate the number of people to be served and expected outcomes for the proposed program. What outcomes will be achieved in year one post program? Please complete and include the Outcomes Form provided in Appendix E. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your program? Describe partner commitments to provide data needed to evaluate program effectiveness.

8. Sustainability Plan (5 points)

Summarize your agency's total budget and total project budget and describe the source and amount of non-WIOA funds committed and pending for the specific services proposed in this application. Assuming your program is funded, describe your sustainability efforts, including how your agency would deal with a possible reduction of funding in the second year of this two-year funding cycle, and how this would impact your program.

9. Budget (this is not counted in 20-page limit) (10 points)

Please follow the budget instruction in Appendix H. Please present a budget cover page, a cost detail page and a budget narrative (applicants can create their own budget narrative form using the attached instruction) for the WIOA funding you are requesting for FY 2018. Applications that do not include these forms will not be considered. The job titles and staff initials listed on the cost detail page should match the job descriptions and resumes attached as described above.

These forms should show WIOA funds only. Use the budget instructions page in this RFP as a guide for the requirements under each budget category. Please double check your calculations; all costs must tie out exactly. The budget narrative should present descriptive detail on all line item costs in the budget, so that readers will not be left with questions about how you propose to use the funds.

Collaborative proposals should submit one set of budget forms that clearly identifies the project costs of each agency. Each applicant may apply as the lead applicant for only one proposal.

If your organization has an approved indirect cost rate, please attach a copy of the latest approved rate to your proposal. However, OWD is not obligated to accept that rate and reserves the right to limit indirect cost rates allowable under funded contracts.

VI. TERMS OF PROCUREMENT

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Responses to this RFP must be received by OWD by 5:00 PM on March 15, 2017. All proposals must be submitted by uploading them electronically at **owd.boston.gov**. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure their proposal is complete and submitted on time and that you receive a confirmation receipt via email; if you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of your submission please email Stefanie O'Shea, Workforce and Policy Manager, at stefanie.oshea@boston.gov. Proposals not received by 5:00pm on March 15, 2017 will be disqualified from the competitive process.

LETTER OF INTENT

A letter of intent is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. Letters of intent allow OWD to plan for volume of proposals and resources needed. If your organization is submitting a letter of intent, it should be received by OWD by 5:00 PM on March 10, 2017 via email to 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 inform us via the same email address.

BIDDER'S CONFERENCE

Organizations interested in bidding on the RFP are strongly encouraged to attend the scheduled Bidders' Conference, which will be held on **February 7, 2017** at 10:00 A.M. in the BRA board room on the 9th floor of City Hall. Questions and answers provided at the Bidders' conference will be made available to the public on OWD' website at **owd.boston.gov**.

SUBMISSION OF INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing to Stefanie O'Shea, Policy and Workforce Manager via email: stefanie.oshea@boston.gov. Phone calls will not be accepted. The deadline to submit questions is **March 10, 2017 by 5:00PM.**

Responses to questions received during the procurement process will be posted on the OWD website at: **owd.boston.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 V). 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 Arial font with one-inch margins.
- The proposal narrative may not exceed 20 pages. The page limit does not include the cover sheet, budget forms, or any required attachments.
- Some sections require appended material. All forms should be completed in full.

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.

The point values allocated to each section of the proposal narrative 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.

VII. PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Proposals should follow, in order, the outline below.

Submit online:

- 1. Proposal Cover Sheet** – *appendix D*
- 2. Narrative Submission** – This section has a 20-page limit.
 - Proposal Summary
 - Agency Background and Organizational Capacity
 - Statement of Need and Target Population
 - Program Design
 - WIOA Required Sequence of Services

- Staffing and Facilities
- Outcomes
- Sustainability Plan

3. Outcomes Form – appendix E

Use this worksheet to identify your proposed program’s outcomes. Outcomes should follow the format in the form. Indicate the number of WIOA Youth you expect to serve and the number you anticipate will achieve each outcome. Add additional outcomes, if necessary.

4. One-Page visual depiction of your career pathways model

5. Signed Memorandum of Agreement(s) / Letter(s) of Support

MOA/Letter of Support must be signed by the CEO of each organization or a designee who has senior operational authority for collaborations requesting funding for one or more agency. Employer partnerships are a requirement for funding under this RFP and proposals must include at least one employer MOA.

6. Budget Forms and Budget Narrative – appendix H

Develop a budget for the amount of WIOA funds you are requesting. Refer to the budget instructions page for details on how to complete each worksheet.

Budget cover page: requires the signature of person who prepared the budget

Budget cost detail page: Totals should match throughout your budget forms. Formulas have been included to calculate totals automatically.

Budget narrative: Detail WIOA program costs following guidelines for each section on the budget instructions page.

7. Indirect cost letter, if applicable

Appendices

- A. Letter of Intent to Bid
- B. Income Eligibility Guideline
- C. Career Pathways Continuum
- D. Proposal Cover Sheet
- E. Outcomes Form
- F. WIOA Required Sequence of Services
- G. Individualized Service Strategy
- H. Budget Instruction and Forms
- I. WIOA Service Elements