

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
One-Stop Operator for the Southern Alleghenies PA CareerLink® sites

PURPOSE

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) requires each Local Workforce Development Area to have at least one comprehensive one-stop service center that provides services to employers and jobseekers. Furthermore, the aforementioned legislation requires that a One-Stop Operator must be competitively procured by July 1, 2017. This requirement has led the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission (SAPDC), on behalf of the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board (SAWDB), to issue this request for proposals for a One-Stop Operator, hereafter referred to as the Operator, for the PA CareerLink® sites located in the Southern Alleghenies region. This RFP has been prepared in accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 15-16, Workforce System Policy No. 121-04 (draft), Financial Management Guide (draft), and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

BACKGROUND

The WIOA, was passed in July 2014, and replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) which had been the primary federal workforce development law for the past 16 years. Inherent in the new legislation is improved and seamless service delivery to employers and jobseekers through greater alignment of education, economic development and workforce systems and resources. The WIOA calls for the continuation of the existing service delivery structure, the nation's network of one-stop career centers. In Pennsylvania they are known as PA CareerLink® sites.

The SAPDC is pleased to issue this request for proposals to identify a single eligible entity or consortium or a coalition of eligible organizations, to serve as the Operator (as defined by WIOA) for management of the SAWDB's 5 comprehensive PA CareerLink® sites and one affiliated site. The Operator role will be distinct from the roles of the direct providers at PA CareerLink® sites. Those partner organizations that contribute to the operations of the region's PA CareerLink® sites through the Resource Sharing Agreement and Budget (RSAB) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be come under the direction of the Operator.

The contract with the organization/s selected under this solicitation will **begin on July 1, 2017.**

SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PROFILE

The Southern Alleghenies region is composed of six counties in south-central Pennsylvania and includes Fulton, Huntingdon, Blair, Bedford, Somerset and Cambria. The majority of the region is rural and forested with a total land area of 4,164 square miles. The region's population stands at roughly 460,000 with an average median age of 42 years. In terms of educational attainment, more than 85% of the population has a high school diploma or equivalent but only 14% hold a Bachelor's Degree or higher.

The economy in the Southern Alleghenies region continues its transformation from recession to recovery while still dealing with the many issues commonly associated with a prolonged severe downturn. Looking back to 2010, the recession deepened across the region in its latter stages as job losses spiked before giving way to shallower declines through 2014. Since then slow improvement is taking place in the pace of hiring, despite uneven progress as some industries remain depressed or have worsened, such as the manufacturing, mining and gas drilling as well as other businesses centered in the defense and

energy sectors. Others, such as healthcare and the service industry, have shown slow but steady growth. The regional economy faces a number of challenges covering a broad spectrum that includes:

- Aging population;
- Declining labor force;
- Skills gaps in the labor force needed by employers and those found in the work force;
- Struggle to attract and retain younger workers for the region;
- Creating employment opportunities through a more diverse business base and attraction of new industries.

The region has witnessed a generally slow hiring pace combined with the loss of family sustaining, goods-producing jobs. These positions have been replaced with service industry positions and contribute to the weak job market. In addition, job creation has fallen off resulting in many occupations only experiencing hiring as a result of replacement openings. The history of the region is linked to coal, steel, railroads, and agriculture. The coal and steel industry in the region declined sharply in the 1980s, with only limited activity in these industries remaining. The economy of the Southern Alleghenies Region is now more diverse than it was a decade ago, with no reliance on any one sector. Nearly two-thirds of the jobs in the region are concentrated in five sectors: health care and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing, accommodations and food service and other professional services.

To meet the needs of the region's jobseekers and employers, the SAWDB currently supports five comprehensive sites in the counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Huntingdon and Somerset and one affiliated site in the county of Fulton. In addition to the mandated one-stop partners, the PA CareerLink® sites in the Southern Alleghenies also include partners from secondary and post-secondary education, career and technology centers, adult education, and a staffing agency. This year, the total partner financial contribution to site operations, less individual partner staffing costs, is roughly \$800,000.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Organizations eligible to apply under this solicitation include:

- Institutions of Higher Education;
- Community-based Organizations;
- Non-profit Organizations;
- Workforce Intermediaries;
- Government Agencies;
- For-profit Entities;
- Non-traditional Public Secondary School/s;
- Any interested organization that has the ability to carry out the duties of the one-stop operator.

The Operator will be accountable to the SAWDB and the Chief Local Elected Officials of the Southern Alleghenies Region.

REQUIRED APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

The selected Operator will have a proven record of performance in selecting, managing and developing staff and partnerships. Knowledge and understanding of the WIOA, applicable federal and state regulations, and PA Department of Labor and Industry policies, and the region's Local and Regional Plan is expected. The SAWDB envisions the region's PA CareerLink® sites as the 'go to' resource for employers looking for skilled employees and jobseekers looking to enter or re-enter the world of work.

With the WIOA's increased emphasis on serving individuals with barriers to employment and out-reach to out-of-school youth, greater emphasis will be placed on identification of effective and innovative outreach strategies. Additional information on the board's vision for workforce development can be found in the 2016 Transitional Regional Plan at www.sapdc.org/sawib

OPERATOR ROLES AND PROHIBITED FUNCTIONS

Under the leadership of the SAWDB, and with guidance from the PA CareerLink site's Core Partners, the selected Operator will be tasked with the coordination of service delivery of one-stop partners and related service providers in the region's multi-center, one-stop public workforce system.

Duties of the one-stop operator include support for the following:

- Fiscal management and oversight in concert with the PA CareerLink® site administrators and the SAPDC, as fiscal agent. This include assistance in the preparation and maintenance of the Resource Sharing Agreement;
- Seamless integration and availability of services by PA CareerLink® partners;
- Oversight of the performance management system relative to WIOA Performance Metrics;
- Evaluation of customer needs and satisfaction;
- Preparation for SAWDB quality reviews and compliance with PA Department of Labor and Industry and SAWDB one-stop certification criteria;
- Liaison with the SAWDB to include participation in SAWDB and pertinent committee meetings;
- Marketing and outreach for the PA CareerLink® sites and system to jobseekers and employers;
- Recruitment of additional partners;
- Professional development of PA CareerLink® staff;
- Communication of strategic objectives of the SAWDB;
- Tracks and implements the negotiated one-stop partner Memoranda of Understanding;
- Continuous improvement through responding to assessment of customer needs;
- Selection and support for PA CareerLink® site administrators. Note - all current site administrators are expected to be retained and will remain employees of their current employers of record. The Operator will act as the functional supervisor of the site administrators.

Adjustments to the aforementioned duties may be made following input from the board and the region's PA CareerLink Core Partners and consideration by the SAWDB.

The selected Operator must disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from the relationships of the Operator with training service providers. The Operator will refrain from establishing practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term services.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Address the following in the proposal response:

- Mission and goals of your organization or consortium, identification of your primary customers and services provided, and your outreach strategies to reach your target clients;
- Experience in assisting individuals to enter the workforce and relationship with the region's PA CareerLink® sites;
- Experience in working with employers to address their hiring needs;

- Why your organization/consortium of entities is well-positioned to serve in the capacity as the one-stop operator

RELATIONSHIP OF OPERATOR TO THE SAWDB AND PA CAREERLINK® PARTNERS

The SAWDB will maintain a contractual relationship with the selected Operator and will provide ongoing policy guidance and strategic direction to ensure that the board’s vision and performance expectations remain in the forefront and are addressed. The SAWDB is also responsible for performance monitoring and will perform periodic quantitative, qualitative and on-site reviews of Operator performance to ensure that expectations are being met.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The SAWDB staff will assist in the provision of accurate and timely data affording the Operator the ability to make data driven decisions to improve performance and customer and client satisfaction.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

The SAWDB will allocate \$15,000 of WIOA Title I funding support to the Operator in year one. It is expected that the Operator will leverage other funding in order to support its activities and ultimately improve the public workforce system for job seekers and employers. The possibility of financial support through the Resource Sharing Agreement Budgets will be considered in subsequent years. Funding to cover the cost of the PA CareerLink® site administrators, along with facility operations costs will be covered through the partner-approved Resource Sharing Agreement Budget.

CONTRACT PERIOD

The anticipated time frame for the contract that will be awarded from this request for proposal (RFP) is July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, with an option, based on successful performance, to renew the contract each year thereafter for a total of four years.

Timeline

- Release of RFP: Thursday, May 11, 2017
- Bidders’ Questions to be sent via email to whisler@sapdc.org by Thursday, May 25, 2017
- Answers to submitted questions will be provided electronically to those who submitted questions and will also be posted on www.sapdc.org/sawib by Tuesday, May 30, 2017
- Proposals are due: May 31, 2017
- Proposal Review and Selection: May 31, 2017 to June 13, 2017
- SAPDC and SAWDB Award of Contract: June 13, 2017 (SAWDB Executive Committee Recommendation), SAPDC Board Review and Concurrence to follow

Budget

- WIOA Title 1 funds in the amount of **\$15,000** are being made available to support this effort. The allocation was based on an analysis of time spent and level of effort by the previous one-stop operator coordinating services in the region.
- Proposers need to identify all funding, including non-Title I leveraged funds that will be used to support the one-stop operator effort.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE & REQUIRED INFORMATION

The proposal to this request must contain the following:

- Description of the proposer’s organization or in the case of consortiums, a brief description of those entities that make up the consortium.

- Proposer’s identification number (EIN)
- Proposer’s name, or if a consortium, lead agency
- Corporate address
- Telephone numbers
- Contact person(s), including email address

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals will include the following information arranged in the order shown:

- **Title Page:** identifying the proposer’s name, address, telephone number, contact person and email.
- **Organizational Profile:** information found under the “Organizational Profile & Required Information” Section
- **Proposal Narrative:** identify succinctly how the proposer will help the SAWDB realize its vision for workforce development including expanded outreach to those with barriers to employment. Include concise responses to the bullet points identified under ‘Proposal Narrative.’ This section will not exceed 10 pages.
- **Proposal Submission:** Proposals in response to this RFP are due by 4:00 PM on Wednesday, May 31, 2017. A hard copy must be submitted to the following:

Susan K. Whisler
SAWDB Director
Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission (SAP&DC)
3 Sheraton Dr.
Altoona, PA 16601

In addition, an electronic copy must be submitted to Susan Whisler at whisler@sapdc.org by the 4:00 PM deadline.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Once proposals are received, the SAWDB staff will review and evaluate proposals to ensure responsiveness to the RFP and confirm that proposers are not suspended or debarred. SAWDB staff will be held to the provisions in their signed SAP&DC Conflict of Interest policy and the Statement of Financial Interests, completed by the SAWDB director. The proposals will then be presented to a subcommittee of SAWDB for review. In determining membership on the review subcommittee, staff will ensure that those participating in the proposal review are free from a conflict of interest. For this RFP, the following criteria will be evaluated:

- Proposer’s understanding of the requirements of the Operator and the public workforce system in the Southern Alleghenies and demonstrated capabilities to carry out the duties of the Operator as outlined in this RFP;
- Connection to the public workforce system including service to common customer groups (job seeker and employer) and strategies for outreach to those with barriers to employment
- Leveraged resources the proposer brings to the role of Operator

The subcommittee will rank the proposals independently and then meet in person to discuss the rankings and prepare their recommendations. These recommendations for funding will be taken to the full SAWDB for review and action.

The board's recommendations will then be taken to the SAP&DC Board of Directors, the region's Chief Local Elected Officials (LEOs), for final review and contracting consideration. During each step of the review and approval process, members will be informed of potential conflicts of interest and meeting minutes will reflect the publically cast votes and abstentions.

The SAP&DC is the responsible authority for handling complaints or protests regarding the proposal selection process. No protest shall be accepted by the State Grantor Agency (PA Department of Labor and Industry) until all administrative remedies at the grantee (SAP&DC) level have been exhausted. This includes, but is not limited to, disputes, claims, protests of award, source evaluation or other matters of a contractual nature. Matters concerning violation of law shall be referred to such authority as may have proper jurisdiction.

The SAP&DC and SAWDB would like to have the opportunity to respond to any inquiry or resolve any dispute prior to the filing of an official complaint by the protester. It is the policy the SAWDB that all actual or prospective bidders, respondents, offerors, or sub-recipients who believe they are aggrieved by the solicitation or awards of WIOA service contracts be offered administrative adjudication. The following outlines the specific appeal process to be used:

Step 1: Advise the SAP&DC Administrative Officer of Complaint

Any party that believes it is aggrieved should seek resolution of their complaint(s) initially with the SAP&DC Administrative Officer. Such complaints may be made verbally or in writing.

In the event that resolution at this initial Step 1 is not accomplished or feasible, the SAP&DC Administrative Officer shall advise the party initiating the complaint(s) in writing to proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Filing of Protest with SAP&DC Administrative Officer

Formal protest shall be made in writing to the SAP&DC Administrative Officer and shall be filed within 15 calendar days after the date of the written notice to the protestor from Administrative Officer to proceed to Step 2.

Protests filed after 15 calendar days, as specified above, will not be considered.

Written protests shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

- The name and address of the protestor
- Clear indication that the communication is a formal, written protest/appeal
- Appropriate identification of the procurement, such as the service(s), which were the basis of the solicitation or award in question
- A statement of reasons for the protest
- Supporting exhibits, evidence or documents to substantiate any claims

The Administrative Officer, acting on behalf of the SAP&DC and SAWDB, may request additional information from the protestor who shall submit the information within time periods set forth at the time of the requests(s).

When a protest has been properly filed, the Administrative Officer shall notify SAWDB staff and the Fiscal Agent of the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Area not to contract until the protest has been settled, unless, after consultation with the Fiscal Agent, the Administrative Officer determines that the award of contracts without delay is necessary to protect substantial interests of the Workforce Development Area.

Step 3: Review by a subcommittee of the SAWDB and Local Elected Officials

A subcommittee of the SAWDB and Local Elected Officials, and with the participation of SAWDB staff, shall conduct an oral debriefing with properly designated representatives of the protesting party at which time the facts upon which a SAWDB decision was made will be explained and discussed with the protesting party's representatives.

Following the oral debriefing, and in consultation with the SAWDB Executive Committee and a duly designated representative of the Local Elected Officials (LEOs), decisions on protests/appeals shall be rendered and conveyed in writing to the party who has filed the protest on behalf of the SAWDB within ten (10) calendar days.

Decisions so rendered are considered final at the local SAWDB level.

Step 4: Referral to Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

If the protest can not be resolved through Steps 1 through 3 above, the issue will be referred to the Governor's office for resolution by the authorized representative of the Governor. Decisions so rendered are considered final and binding upon all parties.

STANDARD FORM 424A INSTRUCTIONS

1. Section A – BUDGET SUMMARY

Column A – Lines 1 through 5 Grant Program, Function or Activity

- Indicate funding source budget information is being requested

Column B – Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number

- Indicate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number as assigned for funding source being requested.

Column C and Column D – Estimated Unobligated Funds

- Indicate the dollar amount of Federal and Non-Federal Funds being requested; initial submission only.

Column E and Column F – New or Revised Budget

- Indicate the additional dollar amount of Federal and Non-Federal Funds needed; complete only after initial submission.

Column G – New or Revised Budget Total

- Formulated to calculate the total amount of Federal and Non-Federal Funds awarded.

2. SECTION B – BUDGET CATEGORIES

Grant Program, Function or Activity – Total Budget by line item for each funding source; WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker and WIA Youth.

- Wages – Total Staff Wages charged to WIA Funding source; must attach staff plan to include FTE, Annual Salary, Title, percent charged to budget.
- Fringes – Total amount budgeted for fringe benefits; include a description of types of benefits included in line. If pooling fringe benefits, must attach allocation methodology.
- Travel – Total amount budgeted for travel expense.
- Equipment – Any item over \$750 and every Computer or Technology related purchase such as; Monitor, Keyboard, Processor, Printer, or Software.
- Supplies – Total amount budgeted for consumable supplies and equipment/furniture less than \$750.
- Contractual – Total amount budgeted for contracted services. Must attach a copy of agreement and a complete description of services to be performed.
- Construction – N/A – No funds may be obligated for construction.

- Other – Total amount budgeted for other operating expenses. May also include customer wages, fringes, stipends and other related costs. Must attach a detailed description for all amounts included.
- Total Direct Charges – Total amount budgeted for each Grant Program, Function or Activity.
- Indirect Charges – Total amount of pooled direct costs or allocated administration. Must submit cost allocation plan if budget includes amounts in this line.
- Total – Total of Direct and Indirect budgeted for each Grant Program, Function or Activity.

SERVICE PROVIDER

BUDGET PERIOD

OMB Approval no. 0348-0044

Standard Form 424A

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non- Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1.						-
2.						-
3.						-
4.						-
5. TOTALS	N/A	-	-	-	-	-

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY

6. OBJECT CLASS CATEGORIES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) TOTAL
a. Personnel					-
b. Fringe Benefits					-
c. Travel					-
d. Equipment					-
e. Supplies					-
f. Contractual					-
g. CareerLink					-
h. Other					-
l. Total direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	-	-	-	-	-
j. Indirect Charges					-
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	-	-	-	-	-
7. PROGRAM INCOME					-