

Request for Proposal

Issued by:

Northwest Central Illinois (NCI) Works

The Workforce Development Board for
Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside
Counties

For:

NCI Works is requesting proposals to hire a consultant to assess why an employer in the 8-county workforce region hires or does not hire applicants for each of the three targeted populations: veterans, individuals with disabilities, and individuals who are returning from incarceration or who are not able to pass a criminal background check.

The consultant will develop 1) a general profile and 2) profiles for significant Northwest Illinois industries that are specified in the Request for Proposals.

Project Administration provided by:

NCI Works

815 N. Orlando Smith Avenue, Room C328

Oglesby, IL 61348

Contract Administration provided by:

Business Employment Skills Team, Inc.

815 N. Orlando Smith Avenue, Room C328

Oglesby, IL 61348

**Request for Proposals
NCI Works
Targeted Population Hiring Assessment**

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I. General

A. Background

NCI Work's mission is to work hand-in-hand with business, service, government, education and non-profit organizations to enable workers to work and businesses to compete.

Since its organization under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Northwest Central Illinois Works (NCI Works) has worked to address the workforce needs of, Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside Counties. The mission statement of NCI Works reflects its desire to “enable workers to work and businesses to compete”.

In the Executive Summary of the final regulations, it states that the purpose of WIOA is to “seek[s] to deliver a broad array of integrated services to customers of the public workforce system, which include both individuals seeking jobs and skills training and employers seeking skilled workers. The law improves the public workforce system by more closely aligning it with regional economies and strengthening the network of about 2,500 one-stop centers.”

In order to fulfill this mandate, NCI Works seeks to assist the employer community to more fully understand and address the issues relating to the creation of a continuous pool of qualified applicants available to meet their hiring needs.

B. Purpose of the Request for Proposal

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires local workforce boards such as NCI Works to develop a “local workforce investment system” that:

- ▶ Improves the quality of the workforce;
- ▶ Reduces welfare dependency; and
- ▶ Enhances the productivity and competitiveness of the Local Workforce Area

NCI Works seeks a consultant(s) to assess why an employer in the workforce region hires or does not hire each of the three targeted populations. The three targeted populations are: Individuals with disabilities, Individuals with a criminal history, and Veterans. The consultant will develop 1) a general profile for each population and 2) profiles for significant Northwest Illinois industries, such as:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Construction
- Education
- Energy production
- Food processing
- Government

- Healthcare
- Logistics/transportation
- Retail
- Services
- Tourism/recreation
- Other

The consultant should also identify attitude types that are favorable or unfavorable to hiring and assessing how such types may be influenced by marketing, outreach, and relationship-building/networking. The consultant's work will position NCI Works and its partners to develop a new or updated marketing/outreach plan (including content) directed towards employers, support/community organizations, and families. Additionally, consultant's work will position NCI Works and its partners to develop a new or updated curriculum (for targeted populations).

C. Submittal of Proposals

Proposals may be submitted electronically to Pam_Furlan@best-inc.org.

Proposals must be received by 3:00 p.m. on June 8, 2018. Any proposal received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

D. Funding

Available funding for the combined project is anticipated to be in the range of \$60,000-\$80,000.

E. Duration

The Consultant should plan to begin on or shortly after July 1, 2018 and may end any time activities are completed but not to exceed 12 months, unless agreed upon by all parties prior to completion of the project. The final product is subject to acceptance by NCI Works. Roll-out of the project is expected to occur prior to the end of the project.

F. Inquiries

Inquiries should be addressed to Pam Furlan, Executive Director at pam_furlan@best-inc.org or (815)224-0375.

II. Project Description

A. Goal

The goal is to assist the NCI Works local workforce system with enhancing its approach to supporting the targeted populations identified in its local plan: individuals with disabilities, veterans, and individuals returning from incarceration. The current approach is more passive and lacks a well-defined strategy. To become more effective in the system's services delivery to these individuals, NCI Works must take a different path – one influenced by scientifically rigorous data collection directly from employers, and analysis of that data – that allows the organizations to get more out of their programming and better serve the aforementioned targeted populations.

B. Required Components

The consultant will contact employers across the entire 8-county area to collect data in response to questions such as, but not limited to:

Questions (Employer-Related)

- How common is the hiring problem (i.e., not hiring from targeted populations) or is the hiring problem isolated instead?
- In general, what beliefs, biases, and psychologies are at play?
 - By industry
 - By corporation
 - By individual (HR director, interviewer, etc.)
- What other factors are at play, including technical and technological?
- How does being in a rural area affect hiring psychology? Does it?
- Does local ownership of firms' vs non-local ownership of firms matter?
- Does willingness to hire or not to hire vary by industry?
- Is apprenticeship or union hiring different?
- What represents low-hanging fruit/actionable items?
 - General
 - Specific
- For each industry, can a continuum of specific hiring barriers be established and illustrated using infographics? For example:
 - Hard (unlikely to be overcome) = legal requirements, etc.
 - Soft (may be overcome) = individual attitudes, corporate attitudes, community attitudes, perception of legal requirements, etc.
 - Other (somewhere in the middle) = financial resources, external trends, labor availability characteristics, etc.
- What specific legal or regulatory hurdles impact each industry (hard barriers)?
- In what ways is current marketing inadequate?

Questions (Targeted Populations-Related)

- In general, what beliefs, biases, and psychologies are at play?
 - By targeted population
 - By support/community organization
 - By family
- In what ways is current curriculum inadequate?
- What represents low-hanging fruit/actionable items?
 - General
 - Specific
- If this is leading towards a Phase II (where NCI Works prepares another grant application), what should we expect from our:
 - Consultant that designs the new/updated curriculum?

A summary of the findings, as well as specific recommendations for addressing any issues, should be included in the consultant's final report to NCI Works. It is very likely that the data collected will form the basis of a Phase II of this project. Phase II would include the development/updating of a marketing plan appropriate for the findings, and/or the designing of a new curriculum that will focus on preparing these populations for successfully obtaining and retaining self-sufficient employment. Therefore, the consultant's recommendations should include the expectations NCI Works should require of Phase II consultants.

C. Expected Output

Expected Output:

- Scientific review of existing research
- One-on-one interviews by sector
- One-on-one interviews by targeted populations, support/community organizations, and families
- Scientific survey of businesses within the workforce region
- Consultant catalogues data gathered, what's been said, and what's not been said, and interprets raw data, providing recommendation/next steps
- Review of existing curriculum and marketing (not responsible for new or updated curriculum/marketing)
- Information about and infographic on hard, soft, and other barriers to hiring

D. Measurable Outcomes

- Summary Report as described in Section B above
- Better understanding of targeted population and employer situation
- Expectations to hire consultant for curriculum development
- Expectations to hire consultant for marketing plan

II. Contract and Proposal Information

- A. Bidders are required to follow the guidelines contained in this document in preparing response proposals. Guidelines address both the structure of the proposal and the content of the proposal.
- B. **All** proposals submitted in response to the RFP will be subject to review by a review committee of members of NCI Works.
- C. NCI Works retains the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this proposal process if it is in the best interest of NCI Works to do so.
- D. This proposal does not commit NCI Works or BEST, Inc. to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal, or to procure or contract for services or supplies prior to issuance of a written contract document.
- E. Bidders shall submit their proposals electronically.
- F. Proposals submitted and not selected for funding will not be returned.
- G. The content of the proposal submitted by the selected bidder (contractor) will become part of its contract with BEST, Inc., for NCI Works.
- H. Proprietary rights to all data, materials, documentation, and products originated by and prepared for NCI Works pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to NCI Works.
- I. Throughout the duration of the project, the consultant(s) must recognize the NCI Works in all surveys, correspondence and communications with relevant stakeholders in region.
- J. The contractor will be prohibited from disseminating products and information developed under the contract without the prior written consent of NCI Works.
- K. NCI Works and BEST, Inc. will consult with the contractor regarding implementation of the contract. As part of the consultation, the contractor will receive instructions on the billing schedule and submittal procedures.
- L. A designated committee of NCI Works is authorized to accept and approve or reject the services furnished by the contractor.
- M. The contractor shall provide oral and/or written progress reports to NCI Works during the contract period. Such reports will address the contractor's progress in completing project activities.

- N. Payment for services provided under the contract shall not be construed as evidence of the NCI Works acceptance of the project deliverables, as described in the Program Description of the proposal. The contractor will provide copies of all written deliverables in draft and final form to NCI Works. Should NCI Works reject any or all of the project deliverables, NCI Works will notify the contractor in writing of such rejection giving the reason(s) therefore. The right to reject the report shall extend throughout the term of the contract and for ninety (90) days after the contractor submits the final billing for payment.
- O. The contract may be modified to include additional tasks reasonably related to the initial project with additional funding to support completion of those additional tasks. Modifications must be in writing and approved by NCI Works.

IV. Guidelines for the Preparation of the Proposal

The proposal **must** be assembled according to the following outline:

- A. Cover Sheet
- B. Table of Contents
- C. Executive Summary (1-2 page/s)
- D. Project Description
- E. Budget Information Worksheet
- F. Implementation Plan
- F. Attachments

Please read and follow the guidelines. Specifications are presented on the following pages, along with comments and suggestions which will appear in *italicized* print.

Bidders are cautioned to submit the Proposal(s) on the most favorable basis, price and terms. Acceptance of the Program Proposal enables an entity to enter into detailed negotiations based on the information that is initially submitted.

A. Cover Sheet

- 1) Complete all items of information on the cover sheet.
- 2) Include the cover sheet as the first item in the proposal

Comments and Suggestions: The cover sheet is the identification tag for the proposal. Be sure that all the information has been completed accurately.

B. Table of Contents

- 1) Indicate all headings and subheadings with appropriate page numbers.

- 2) List all appendices by title and page number. For ease of the reviewer, appendices should be inserted at the end of the appropriate section rather than at the end of the entire proposal.

C. Executive Summary

Prepare a brief (1-2 page/s) abstract that summarizes the **key** points regarding the completion of this project.

Comments and Suggestions: The summary is probably the first thing that will be read. It should be clear, concise and specific. It should identify the proposer and the projected cost for performing project activities and producing the project deliverables identified in Section II. It should also briefly describe the approach to be used for performing project activities.

D. Project Description

Prepare a narrative description of how the activities listed in **Section II Project Description** will be completed and deliverables will be achieved.

E. Project Activities Schedule

Proposers shall include an Implementation Plan for each project component identifying the critical project activities, associated task(s), projected time-frames, and deliverables. The project activities and tasks that are identified on this form will be the basis for providing the monthly report.

The Implementation Plan should reflect, complement and support the required activities in the **Section II Project Description**.

F. Budget

Develop a budget using the Budget Information Worksheet and Budget Information Summary, Attachment A. A separate worksheet for each line item is to be developed and submitted as back up to the Budget Information Worksheet.

G. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation of each proposal will be based on the following criteria:

- adherence to Proposal guidelines 10%
- how the proposal narrative meets the information requested in the Program Description. 50%
- competitive total cost for performing proposal activities 20%
- evidence of the proposer's knowledge and prior experience in conducting similar projects 20%

Each proposal will be independently evaluated by selected members of NCI Works.

Attachments

**Cover Sheet
Budget Information Summary
Budget Information Worksheet
Implementation Plan**

NCI Works
Community Audit Proposal

Proposal Cover Sheet

Name of Organization _____

Mailing Address _____
City, State, Zip Code _____

Telephone Number _____

Project's Contact Person _____
(Name/Title) _____

Name/Title of Person _____
Authorized to Negotiate Contract

Telephone Number _____

Name/Title of Person _____
Authorized to Sign Contract

Telephone Number _____

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge that the governing body of the proposer's organization has authorized the submission of this proposal

Authorized Signature _____ Date _____

Budget Information Summary

Complete the line item Budget Summary page for each proposal that is being submitted for review.

1. Personnel – Salaries to be paid for Project Personnel

2. Fringe Benefits – Payments other than salaries and wages made to staff, or paid on their behalf.

3. Travel – Amount requested for staff travel to conduct official business in carrying out project activities.

4. Program Costs – Amounts necessary to carry out the project activities.

5. Indirect Cost Rate – Indicate indirect costs. You must also include a copy of your Indirect Cost Agreement.

6. Other – Indicate all direct costs not clearly covered by lines 1 through 5.

Total Funds Requested: Show total lines 1 through 6.

Budget Information Worksheet

Attach a separate detailed budget worksheet for each line item listed below. Enter total funding requested from each separate line item.

- 1. Personnel – _____
- 2. Fringe Benefits – _____
- 3. Travel – _____
- 4. Program Costs – _____
- 5. Indirect Cost Rate – _____
- 6. Other - _____

- Total Funds Requested:** _____

