



BEST, Inc.

Business Employment Skills Team
Serving Northwest Central Illinois
www.best-inc.org



A proud partner of the **AmericanJobCenter** network

February 13, 2026

Dear Youth Provider:

On behalf of NCI Works, the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. is soliciting Request for Proposals (RFP) for projects under the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** Youth funds for Program Year '26 (by July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027). The RFP will be posted on the websites below starting February 13, 2026. A copy of the RFP can also be obtained by either requesting a copy through email (joann_johnson@best-inc.org) by telephone (815-780-0871). The RFP is also posted with fillable forms to the following websites:

www.best-inc.org
www.nciworks.org

Should you decide to respond to the RFP it will be very important for you to explain how you plan to execute the services that are outlined and also how you are connecting the youth to the communities. We are asking you to take the time to download and review the RFP package to determine if your organization and/or institution can benefit from partnering with the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. in serving local youth.

Please note that projects for funding in-school programs will not be considered. Responses to the RFP must be received electronically no later than 3:00 on March 13, 2026.

Sincerely,

Carrie Folken, Executive Director
Business Employment Skills Team, Inc.
Northwest Central IL Works!

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Issued by:

Business Employment Skills Team, Inc.

(BEST, Inc.) For:

Northwest Central Illinois Works (NCI Works)

Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside
Counties

Program:

Northwest Central Illinois Works
WIOA Youth Project

Date Issued: February 13, 2026

Due Date: March 13, 2026

Limitations:

This RFP does not commit BEST, Inc. or NCI Works to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal to this request, or to procure or contract for services or supplies.

Questions:

Questions should be addressed only to Sally Hanrahan, Business
Employment Skills Team, Inc. at 815-618-9848 or by email at
sally_hanrahan@best-inc.org

Evaluation and Review:

Proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria attached in this
packet and only in accordance with the written material submitted in
the proposal.

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I. General

A. Definitions

Applicant	An organization which is applying for funds to deliver the program described in this Application for Funding (bidder).
NCI Works	Public name for the Northwest Central Illinois Works. NCI Works coordinates and oversees the local One-Stop system in the 8-county area.
Career Planner	Formally known as a Case Manager. This is the staff member that will work most closely with the provider.
IWDS	The Illinois Workforce Development System is a statewide database that tracks information about each participant.
Measurable Skills Gains: Literacy/Numeracy Levels	The purpose of the Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) indicator is to track and measure important progressions and achievements made by WIOA clients (entered in training or education), through pathways and towards various goals of their individual programs. Further information is in Attachment B.
Participant/youth	A person who is officially enrolled in the Program and who meets all eligibility for participation.
Performance Standards	A set of goals established in concert with Business Employment Skills Team, the State of Illinois and the federal Department of Labor.
Program Operator or Service Provider	Once an applicant has been accepted for funding, they are now identified as a Program Operator or Service Provider. Any awarded contracts will explain your responsibilities as a sub-recipient of federal funding.
CASAS (TABE)	The CASAS is an assessment tool which places youth in a grade level equivalent measures in reading and math. An alternative assessment would be TABE.
State of Illinois High School Diploma	As of January 1, 2023, the State of Illinois High School Diploma replaced the High School Equivalency Certificate (HSE).
Business Employment Skills Team, Inc.	Legal name of the organization releasing this Application for Funding. Also known as BEST, Inc.
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is the governing legislation which controls NCI Works.

Workforce Innovation Board (WIB)	The governing Board of NCI Works as established by WIOA. The One Stop Services Committee is the board committee that directly oversees and evaluates youth projects and initiatives.
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B. History

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was passed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA 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. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system.

Section 129 of WIOA specifically outlines activities that focus on longer-term academic and occupational learning opportunities for eligible youth. The One Stop Services Committee of Northwest Central Illinois Works is interested in funding projects that will incorporate these activities and will be tailored to meet the needs of youth in Local Workforce Investment Area 4 (LWIA 4).

C. Intent and Purpose of the Request for Proposal

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act expands available services to youth, including youth development activities that provide a holistic approach to meeting the needs of this emerging population. The WIOA Youth Program encourages local projects that address the needs of eligible youth and support all aspects of the youth's life while also preparing him/her to succeed in the world of work and focusing on career paths and long term goals.

The services provided through this RFP must target out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who by definition fit an out-of-school youth not attending school (as defined under State law), and one of the following – a school drop-out, a youth who received a secondary school diploma and is low income or either basic skills deficient or an English learner, an individual who is in the court system, a homeless individual, a parent or pregnant youth, an individual with a disability, or a low income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. This RFP is intended to allow providers to create their own program design that will meet the needs of WIOA eligible students and accomplish the performance goals set forth.

- WIOA emphasizes non-duplication of services among workforce partners so if a proposal is written to include services that are offered through a partnering program, please explain how duplication of services are not being offered.
- WIOA partners include:
Adult Education; IDES with Wagner-Peyser, Trade Readjustment Act, Unemployment Insurance, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker and Veteran's program; Department of Human Service Rehabilitation Services; Carl Perkins/CTE; CSBG (Tri-County Opportunities Council and Northwest Illinois Community Action Agency; Senior Community Services Employment Program; DHS/TANF.

The strategy for the out-of-school youth is employment experiences and opportunities based on the performance outcomes. To carry out this strategy, the following goals have been identified in LWIA 4:

1. To encourage school drop-outs to return to school or attain a BEST, INC. certificate or a Credit Recovery program
2. To encourage post-secondary school training where appropriate
3. To provide adequate preparation for entry into the workforce through:
 - a. Exposure labor market information/career exploration. Work readiness instruction including essential skills
 - b. Building social interactions skills such as self-esteem, communication, teamwork, etc.

Priority is given to proposals that meet ALL of the strategies and implement the program elements to meet these strategies. A well detailed plan explaining those elements will help to assure the reader/rater has full understanding of the proposal.

D. Funding

A portion of our Youth WIOA funding will be used to accomplish the purpose of this RFP. Bidders may apply for one or more WIOA Youth Projects; however, each project must be submitted separately.

Every effort will be made to award contracts for any and all projects deemed as meeting the intent of this RFP. In the event that the total amount of successful projects exceeds the amount of funding initially set aside for this purpose, one or more successful bidder(s) may be asked to negotiate the costs of the project(s).

E. Duration

Contracts will be awarded by July 1, 2026. All projects should end on or before June 30, 2027. An extension of up to one year may be granted if the need for the project continues to exist, the provider is on target to meet project goals and applicable WIOA performance measures, adequate funding is available and approval is granted by NCI Works.

F. Inquiries

Any inquiries should be addressed to Sally Hanrahan of Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. at (815) 288-1260 or by email at sally_hanrahan@best-inc.org.

G. Submittal/Proposal

An electronic version must be emailed to joann_johnson@best-inc.org. Proposals must be received **by 3:00 p.m. on March 13, 2026**. Any proposal received after the deadline will not be reviewed. Proposals will not be accepted by fax.

II. Project Description

As stated earlier, Section 129 of WIOA specifically outlines allowable activities for eligible youth. These program elements are listed below. Detailed descriptions of the elements are presented in Attachment C.

Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;

- **Alternative secondary school offerings;**
- **Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation and training.**
- **Job Shadowing, Pre-Apprenticeship Program, Employability Skills/Job Readiness Training.**
- **Leadership development opportunities, which may include such activities as positive social behavior and essential skills, decision making, team work, and other activities;**
- **Supportive services;**
- **Adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve (12) months, that may occur both during and after program participation;**
- **Follow-up services for at least 12 months after completion of participation;**
- **Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.**
- **Financial literacy education**
- **Entrepreneurial skills training**
- **Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations counseling and career exploration services**
- **Post-Secondary Preparation and Transition Activities**

In order to be considered for an award, **proposals must address ALL of these elements and must describe in detail how the youth will access the service/activity and how the services will be provided** along with how each element is tied to the performance indicators in Attachment B.

While all of the above program elements must be addressed in the proposal, the program operator is not required to be the entity that directly provides all of the elements. If another agency or partner will be the provider of one or more elements, they must be identified in the proposal.

Any of the services and activities that will be offered may be made available only to eligible youth who live in Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside Counties, although it is entirely possible that the proposed project will target only a portion of this geographic area. In order to assure that all youth in LWIA 4 have the same opportunity to benefit from any WIOA-funded programs, Northwest Central Illinois Works encourages respondents to this RFP to propose projects that will cover as much of the eight-county area as possible.

Youth to be served in a project will be enrolled in the WIOA Youth Program and must meet the eligibility guidelines listed on Attachment A of this proposal. BEST, Inc. staff will be responsible for eligibility determination, objective assessment, development of individual service strategies and final determination of appropriateness for project. The total number of youth participating in the project will vary according to services to be provided and the youth determined to be in need of those services.

Project proposals will contain the following:

1. Well-defined mission statement
2. Staffing: Describe the number and types of individuals who will be charged to the project. Describe whether these positions are new or re-assignment of existing staff. Describe the qualifications and experience of existing staff or qualifications for hiring new staff.
3. The screening process and suitability criteria for selection of staff. This could include character references, child abuse or sexual offender check, driving record and criminal record check, personality profile, skills identification, level of education, career interest and the ability to understand the needs of WIOA-eligible youth.
4. Recruitment: Describe the procedure and approach that will be taken to identify and obtain participation. Describe your understanding of the qualifiers for participation. Provide an assurance that it is understood that selection will require the determination of eligibility and suitability by BEST, Inc. staff before services can be delivered.
5. Non-Duplication: Describe and explain how the reimbursable elements in your proposal do not duplicate existing programs.
6. An Operational Plan that addresses the following areas:
 - *Level of commitment* to the project, such as time, staff, in-kind service, and/or agency's other resources
 - *Identification and description* of the fourteen WIOA youth activities that will be used directly in the project, as well as those that will be indirectly linked to it
 - *Strategy and techniques* that will be used to transition the student to work or post-secondary training.
 - *Documentation* for recording direct contact with the youth, as well as contact between program operator staff and BEST, Inc. staff. BEST, Inc. staff will meet with and provide the program operator staff with the goals and objectives that have been developed for each youth in their Individual Service Plan.
 - ***Quarterly reporting***, both content and format, that outlines project activity, progress to date and at least one success story to be submitted by project staff.
 - ***Orientation*** for youth that provides a project overview, outlines expectations, restrictions, accountability, benefits and rewards. BEST, Inc. staff will assist in the development of the orientation.

7. Goals and Objectives of the project and their relationship to the goals identified for WIOA- eligible youth. The proposal must also explain how these goals and objectives will lead toward the attainment of the following federally-established performance measures (Attachment B):

III. 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 and the content of the proposal. Proposals not adhering to the guidelines and/or instructions may not be reviewed or considered for selection.
- B. All proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be subject to review by a committee comprised of One Stop Services Committee members and BEST, Inc. staff. Final approval for any and all youth projects is the responsibility of NCI Works.
- C. This RFP does not commit 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.
- D. Bidders shall following the instructions as outlined in Section IV and submit one (1) copy of the proposal as outlined in Section I G Submittal/Proposal.
- E. Proposals submitted in response to the RFP and not selected for funding will not be returned.
- F. The final proposal, including any revisions made as a result of negotiations or modifications, submitted by the selected bidder (contractor) will become part of the contract with BEST, Inc.
- G. Proprietary rights to all data, materials, documentation, and products originated by and prepared for BEST, Inc. pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to BEST, Inc.
- H. The contractor will be prohibited from disseminating products and information developed under the contract without the prior written consent of BEST, Inc.
- I. BEST, Inc. will meet with the selected bidder prior to finalizing the contract. The purpose of the meeting will be to make sure both parties share the same understanding of the project goals, activities, outcomes, billing schedule and billing submittal procedures. If the contract is with a school, a copy of the ADA compliance letter will be required at this meeting for the contract.
- J. The Executive Director of BEST, Inc. is authorized to accept, modify and approve or reject the services furnished by the contractor.
- K. The contractor shall provide a written progress report and success story to BEST, Inc. on a quarterly basis. These reports and success stories are due on the fifteenth day following the end of the quarter (i.e. 10/15, 1/15, 4/15, 7/15). These reports and success stories

should be emailed to Sally Hanrahan at sally_hanrahan@best-inc.org. Such reports will address the contractor's progress in completing project activities and goals. Oral and/or other written communication to project liaison during the contract period is encouraged as well. A plan of action or renegotiation of the contract will take place if goal numbers or satisfactory progress is not taking place.

- L. Payment for services provided under the contract shall not be construed as evidence of the BEST, Inc. acceptance of the project deliverables, as identified in Section II and described in Section IV. E. of this RFP. The contractor will provide copies of all written deliverables in draft and final form to BEST, Inc. Should BEST, Inc. reject any or the entire project deliverables, the Executive Director will notify the contractor in writing and cite the reasons for the rejection. 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.
- M. The contract may be modified to include additional tasks reasonably related to the initial project with necessary funding to support completion of those additional tasks provided as appropriate. Requests for any modification to the original contract must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director/LWIB/Programs of BEST, Inc. In accordance with established policies concerning modifications, this request will either be approved by the Executive Director of BEST, Inc. or presented to the One Stop Services Committee for review at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Final approval of modifications requiring formal action will be the authority of NCI Works.
- N. The contractor will make every effort to meet or exceed all applicable WIOA performance measures. If monitoring results or other programmatic reviews by the staff of BEST, Inc. indicate that the contractor may not meet these goals, a corrective action plan may be requested to address problems and/or deficiencies.
- O. The One Stop Services Committee of Northwest Central Illinois Works retains the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received. It also retains the right to negotiate with any qualified party, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP process if that action would be determined to be in the best interests of the One Stop Services Committee of Northwest Central Illinois Works.
- P. If 50% of the planned numeric goals as identified in Section II Program Design and described in Section IV. E. Narrative Description is not achieved by the end of the second quarter of the Program Year, the agreement, including the contract amount is subject to re-negotiation unless acceptable justification can be provided by the contractor.
- Q. The contract will be on a cost reimbursement basis.

IV. Guidelines for the Preparation of the Proposal

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

- A. Cover Sheet
- B. Table of Contents
- C. Executive Summary (1- 2 pages)
- D. Information on Bidder
- E. Narrative Description
- F. Past Demonstrated Effectiveness
- G. Cost Information
 - 1. Budget Worksheets
 - 2. Certification/Agreement Sheets

Please read and follow the guidelines. Proposals that are not in compliance with the guidelines provided in this RFP may not be considered for funding. Specifications along with comments and suggestions that will appear in *italicized* print are presented on the following pages.

Although BEST, Inc. reserves the right to negotiate the price and terms of any proposal, bidders should submit their proposals on the basis of their best offer since an award may be made solely on the initial submission.

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 pages) 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, the activities and services, the number of out-of-school youth and the projected cost for the project. It should also briefly describe the approach for performing project activities and producing the project deliverables identified in Section II. This section is not intended to provide detailed information regarding delineation of tasks to support completion of the project - this type of detailed information should be provided in part E of the proposal.*

D. Information on Bidder

- 1) Provide an explanation of the bidder's experience and background which demonstrates that it has the necessary expertise to successfully carry out the objectives and achieve the goals of the proposed project. Additionally, indicate any experience or the extent to which the organization is familiar with a) the WIOA program and related regulations, and b) strategies and/or program design for serving youth.
- 2) Provide information as to the organization's size and structure as well as the length of time in business. If applicable, indicate if organization is a minority or female owned and operated business.
- 3) Provide brief resumes indicating qualifications of staff members to be assigned to perform services requested. Identify the individual to serve as project liaison.
- 4) Indicate the number of hours each staff assigned to the project will devote to the project.
- 5) Identify references who can be contacted regarding the organization's quality of work on similar projects and capabilities in general.
- 6) Provide a time line demonstrating the planning, implementation and completion of the project.

Comments and Suggestions: *This section primarily serves to provide assurances to Northwest Central Illinois Works, the One Stop Services Committee and BEST, Inc. that the selected bidder will provide quality services. Specifically, that personnel designated to complete the project and accomplish project deliverables possess the necessary qualifications and experience.*

E. Narrative Description

This section should provide a detailed narrative description of the entire project. Specifically, it should describe how each of the program elements listed in Section II (Project Description) will be delivered and how the outcomes within those activities will be achieved. It should also address in detail how non- duplication of services among workforce partners is ensured. WIOA partners include: Adult Education; IDES with Wagner Peyser, Trade Readjustment Act, Unemployment Insurance, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker and Veteran's program; Department of Human Service Rehabilitation Services; Carl Perkins/CTE; CSBG (Tri-County Opportunities Council and Northwest Illinois Community Action Agency; Senior Community Services Employment Program; DHS/TANF.

This section should also address how the goals and objectives listed in Section II. B. 6 will be achieved. **Use Attachment B for this section.**

A Project Schedule should be included which will provide a time line for planning, implementing and completing the project. This schedule will also be utilized to detail the

sequence in which the desired activities and services will be completed.

The Narrative Description should indicate the planned number of youth to be served by the project. Proposals should indicate an enrollment schedule, including the final date new enrollments will be accepted into the project.

In order to make sure that eligible youth are provided every opportunity to succeed, it may be necessary to continue the enrollment of a youth into a following year's project. If the proposer is going to exercise this option, a brief description of the following should be included in the narrative:

1. The number of youth who will be "carried in" from the previous year's project
2. The reason why additional time and services are needed
3. The ongoing/additional services that will be provided and how they will benefit the youth
4. The outcomes/goals that are expected to be achieved as a result of continuing enrollment, as well as an estimated completion date for achieving them.

F. Past Demonstrated Effectiveness

The proposer should provide a brief description of previous project(s) administered under the Workforce Investment Act/Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIA/WIOA), including the following:

- 1) Evidence (e.g., numeric data, achievements, success stories, etc.) that the previous project's stated goals and any applicable WIA/WIOA Performance Measures were achieved. If the project is not yet completed, present an assessment of the status towards meeting the project's stated goals and any applicable WIA/WIOA Performance Measures. (NOTE: If WIA/WIOA Performance Measures apply, results must be included, either by the bidder or by the BEST, Inc. Project Liaison.)
- 2) Changes, if any that will be made to the way services were delivered in the previous project(s) and explain how those changes will contribute to increased successful outcomes for the youth in the proposed project. (This section MUST be completed for the new performance measures.)

G. Cost Information

- 1) Using the forms in Section V. Budget Worksheets, develop a budget that supports the proposed cost for performing project activities and completing project deliverables. Include both the total hours and the hourly rate for each staff position under this project.
- 2) Provide a statement that recognizes invoices for payment will be submitted on a monthly basis unless prior approval for an alternative schedule is obtained from the grantor. Include a payment schedule of estimated expenditures by quarter. The schedule should clearly reflect payments for the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| ● Adherence to RFP guidelines | Required for Consideration |
| ● Project Content/Proposal Guidelines | 60 Point Maximum |
| ● Information on the Bidder/Past Demonstrated Effectiveness | 20 Points Maximum |
| ● Cost Competitiveness | 20 Points Maximum |

Each proposal will be independently evaluated by members of the One Stop Services Committee and BEST, Inc. staff.

* The section Past Demonstrated Effectiveness will be evaluated by BEST, Inc. staff only. Projects that will not be required to complete this section of the narrative will be rated on a total of 80 points rather than 100 points.

Attachment A

Definitions and Eligibility Criteria

Out-of-school youth (OSY) An OSY is an individual who is:

- (a) Not attending any school (as defined under State law);
- (b) Not younger than age 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment; and
- (c) One or more of the following:
 - (1) A school dropout;
 - (2) A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
 - (3) 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;
 - (4) An offender;
 - (5) A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway;
 - (6) An individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;
 - (7) An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
 - (8) An individual with a disability;

Attachment B

Attachment B: WIOA Performance Attainment Percentages:

1. IN PROGRAM

Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)

This performance measure is the only performance measure that takes place while the youth is enrolled with BEST Inc. The measure looks at the percentage of youth who have earned a Skills Gain during the program year.

Examples of skills gains include increasing an educational functioning level, earning an academic credential or making satisfactory progress.

The state has set BEST Inc.'s goal for the MSG at 74%.

Please describe what the project has done and will do to ensure that eligible youth earn a Measurable Skills Gain.

2. AFTER EXIT

After exit, the youth is required to receive follow-up services for one year. These follow-up services are meant to ensure youth success as well as performance measure success in each of the measures below.

It is largely the responsibility of the subcontractor to perform follow-up on students in partnership with a BEST Career Advisor. BEST, Inc. will also provide guidance in this element of the program. A full-year of follow-up should be planned for all enrolled students after their exit from the program. At the completion of training, the service provider is required to consult with BEST staff to review results of the training and the move to the next phase, be it work, post-secondary training, job search, etc.

*Exit is the date the youth is no longer enrolled with BEST Inc. and is determined by BEST Inc.

Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit

This performance measure is the percentage of youth who are working, in the military or enrolled in post-secondary education during the **second** quarter after exit from the program.

The state has set BEST Inc.'s goal for the Employment Rate measure at 73%.

Please describe what the project has done and will do to ensure that youth meet this measure.

Median Earnings

This performance measure is the median (gross) earnings of youth who are working during the **second** quarter after exit from the program.

The state has set BEST Inc.'s goal for the Median Earning Measure at \$4,500.

Please describe what the project has done and will do to ensure that youth meet this measure.

Employment 4th Quarter after exit

This performance measure is the percentage of youth who are working, in the military or enrolled in post-secondary education during the **fourth** quarter after exit from the program.

The state has set BEST Inc.'s goal for the Employment Rate measure at 71%.

Please describe what the project has done and will do to ensure that youth meet this measure.

Credential Attainment Rate

This performance measure is the percentage of youth who earned a credential such as a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent while in the program or during their 1 year of exit AND were employed, in the military or enrolled in post-secondary education.

The state has set BEST Inc.'s goal for the Credential Attainment Rate at 74%.

Please describe what the project has done and will do to ensure that youth meet this measure.

Attachment C

Youth Program Element	Youth Program Element Label (IWDS)	Definition
1	<u>Tutoring/Study Skills</u> <u>Instruction/Dropout Prevention</u>	<p>Educational Achievement Services: Dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Tutoring, study skills training and instruction that lead to a high school diploma are reported under this program element. Such services focus on providing academic support, helping youth identify areas of academic concern, assist with overcoming learning obstacles, and providing tools and resources to develop learning strategies. Methods of instruction may be one-on-one, in a group setting or through resources and workshops.</p> <p>NOTE: Strategies designed to keep youth IN SCHOOL should be reported here. These may include, but are not limited to tutoring, literacy development, active learning experiences, after-school opportunities, and individualized instruction and credit recovery services.</p> <p>Services getting a youth who has dropped out of school back in school are not reported here and should be reported in Youth Program Element #2 Alternative School/Dropout Recovery Services.</p> <p>ALL In-School Youth will be included in the MSG/Credential performance indicators. It is their In-School status at application that triggers the measures not this element, alone.</p>
	<u>Alternative</u>	Alternative secondary school services, such as Adult Education and Literacy

2	<u>School/Dropout Recovery Services</u>	<p>Activities (Developmental Education) basic education skills training, individualized academic instruction, and English as a Second Language Training (English Language Education), are those that assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education. An alternative education program means a comprehensive educational program delivered in a nontraditional learning environment that is distinct and separate from the existing general or special education program. Dropout recovery services, such as credit recovery, counseling, and educational plan development, are those that assist youth who have dropped out-of-school.</p> <p>Services are aimed at reengaging youth, so they pursue education that leads to the completion of a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Examples of services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) basic education skills training; b) individualized academic instruction; c) English language learning; d) counseling related to re-engaging youth in secondary education; e) educational plan development; f) preparation for high school equivalency attainment (for high school dropouts only); and g) educating youth about alternative secondary school programs within the school district and helping them through the process of connecting to an appropriate program.
3	<u>WBL - Paid WEX/Internship (Youth Limited to Summer Months)</u>	<p>A work experience or internship is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace or at a worksite for youth limited to the summer months. A work experience or internship may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. The work experience or internship is paid, as appropriate and consistent with other laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act.</p> <p>Summer Months are defined in IL as May 1st through September 30th.</p>
	<u>WBL - Unpaid WEX/Internship (Youth Limited to Summer Months)</u>	<p>A work experience or internship is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace or at a worksite for youth limited to the summer months. A work experience or internship may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. The work experience or internship is unpaid, as appropriate and consistent with other laws, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act.</p> <p>Summer Months are defined in IL as May 1st through September 30th.</p>
	<u>WBL - Paid WEX/Internship (Not Limited to Summer Months)**</u>	
	<u>WBL - Unpaid WEX/Internship (Not limited to Summer Months)**</u>	

<u>WBL - Pre-Apprenticeship Program</u>	For younger youth, pre-apprenticeship programs can serve as a gateway to Registered Apprenticeship programs, while providing contextual learning that can promote and enhance high school completion levels. Programs are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program that has a documented partnership with an employer and at least one, if not more, Registered Apprenticeship program(s) which includes all of the following: a) Training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the State or region and that has been designed to prepare participants to meet the minimum entry-level requirements of the Apprenticeship. b) Access to educational and career counseling, and other supportive services as needed by participants.c) Hands-on meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as Career Exploration and Career Development Experiences, and that reinforce foundational professional skills including, at a minimum, those outlined in the Essential Employability Skills framework.d) Upon successful completion of the program, participants are supported to apply for a Registered Apprenticeship program and may receive preference for enrollment.A quality pre-apprenticeship program is one that also incorporates inclusive recruitment of underrepresented individuals and strives for credential acquisition. For a more in-depth definition of pre-apprenticeship in Illinois see the IWIB Apprenticeship Illinois Committee Work Group's Approved Definition for Pre-Apprenticeship.
<u>WBL - Job Shadowing</u>	Job shadowing is a work experience option where students learn about a job by walking through the work day as a shadow to a competent worker. They witness firsthand the work environment, employability and occupational skills in practice, the value of professional training, and potential career options. The job shadowing work experience is a temporary, unpaid exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest to the student and can be anywhere from a few hours, to a day, to a week or more.
<u>WBL - OJT - Private Sector (Youth)**</u>	OJT is provided under a contract with an employer or registered apprenticeship program sponsor in the private non-profit or private sector. Through the OJT contract, occupational training is provided for the WIOA participant in exchange for the reimbursement, typically up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and supervision related to the training. LWIAs must consider skill requirements of the occupation, participant's academic and occupational skill, work experience and the ISS. An OJT contract must be limited to the period of time required for participant to become proficient in the training related occupation.
<u>WBL - OJT - Public Sector (Youth)**</u>	Same as OJT just provided in the Public Sector. All provisions listed for OJT - Private Sector apply here.

	<u>WBL - Employability Skills/Job Readiness Training (Youth)</u>	Services that follow the Employability Skills Framework which advances a unifying set of skills that cuts across the workforce development and education sectors based on an inventory of existing employability skills standards and assessments. Soft Skills - Skills and/or abilities that enable someone to relate to others and adapt to a workplace environment and are necessary to being successful in the workplace. Soft skills are non-technical, intangible, and personality-specific skills. Soft skills may include work habits (such as punctuality, appropriate attitude and behavior, cooperation, the ability to take constructive criticism), integrity, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, multitasking, making good and informed decisions, communicating with others, positive job attitude or managing oneself in the workplace, showing initiative and reliability, etc. These services must provide youth with employability skills/job readiness training in order to prepare for a work experience.
	<u>Cash Incentives (Youth)</u>	<p>Incentive payments to youth participants are permitted for recognition and achievement of milestones directly tied to training activities, work experiences, or education. Such incentives for achievement could include improvements marked by acquisition of a credential or other successful outcomes. The local program must have written policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives and must ensure that such incentive payments are tied to the goals of the specific program; outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments; align with the local program's organizational policies; and are in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 CFR Part 200.</p> <p>Federal funds must not be spent on entertainment costs. Therefore, incentives must not include entertainment, such as movie or sporting event tickets or gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment. Additionally, there are requirements related to internal controls to safeguard cash, which also apply to safeguarding of gift cards, which are essentially cash.</p>
4	<u>Occupational Skills Training (Youth)</u>	<p>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 at entry, intermediate or advanced levels. Such training must be specified in the participants Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and be of sufficient duration to impart needed skills and lead to a recognized postsecondary credential. Such programs should be outcome orientated and focused on an occupational goal specified in the ISS.</p> <p>If ITA funded, training program must be on the Illinois ETPL.</p>

	<p><u>Other Non-Occupational Skills Training (Youth)</u></p>	<p>An organized program of study that provides specific non-vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate or advanced levels. Such training must be specified in the participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and be of sufficient duration to impart needed skills. Such programs should be outcome orientated and focused on a non-occupational goal specified in the ISS. Non-Occupational Skills Training is training that enhances employability but does not in itself result in a credential. If a training program does not include a credential, the participant's training can still be funded through WIOA as non-occupational skills training. Non-occupational skill training would not count as a credential in performance reporting, since a credential is not earned as part of that particular training. Non-Occupational Skills training count as a measurable skill gain.</p>
	<p><u>Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)</u></p>	<p>An apprenticeship program registered with the U.S. Department of Labor meeting the standards defined by USDOL under 29 CFR Part 29, Subpart A. Registered Apprenticeship programs provide an effective strategy to meet WIOA's emphasis on providing services to out-of-school youth and increasing youth work experiences. Registered Apprenticeship is an important talent development option that leads to career opportunities in demand-driven occupations. Registered Apprenticeship programs provide youth with the opportunity to "earn while they learn" and obtain portable credentials that can lead to additional positive post-secondary training outcomes. There are five key elements of apprenticeship: Business involvement; Structured on-the-job training; Related instruction; Rewards for skill gains; and Industry-recognized credentials.</p> <p>For younger youth, pre-apprenticeship programs can serve as a gateway to Registered Apprenticeship programs while providing contextual learning that can promote and enhance high school completion levels.</p> <p>High school students enrolled in secondary school who meet the minimum legal age of 16 can be employed as apprentices. Such programs must comply with all applicable laws, including Federal regulations on child labor as stated in the FLSA (see Child Labor Bulletin 101) and state child labor laws. Programs for high school students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) combine academic and technical classroom instruction with work experience, allowing youth to explore a career and develop industry-specific workplace competencies, skills, and knowledge while still enrolled in high school; b) Align academic and technical standards in secondary and postsecondary education, CTE, and industry-recognized credentials and certifications; and c) Incorporate stackable credentials of value for multiple pathways, including entrance into RA programs, community and technical colleges, universities, and sustainable employment. <p>The Registered Apprenticeship Program must be on the Illinois ETPL.</p> <p>NOTE: In IWDS, youth RAPs are reported under the WEX and Training PIRL elements. There is no need to report both elements in IWDS since the system</p>

		pulls from the documentation of related OJT (WEX) AND Youth Occupational Skills Training (ITA) within the RAP service.
5	<u>Integrated Education and Training (IET)/ICAPS</u>	The Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), is the implementation of the Integrated Education and Training (IET) model in Illinois. IET is a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities/basic academic skills which are included as part of alternative secondary school services and dropout recovery services (program element 2) concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities (program element 3) and workforce training (program element 4) for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. ICAPS aims to provide an integrated pathway in Career and Technical Education (CTE) for college credit and/or program certificate opportunities for Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) students that lack basic skills. ICAPS/IET career pathway programs must be approved by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to ensure the three components of integrated education and training are provided concurrently as well as contextually as required.

6	<u>Leadership Development</u>	<p>20 CFR § 681.520 defines this program element as opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities; b) Community and service-learning projects; c) Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring; d) Organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training; e) Training in decision-making, including determining priorities and problem solving; f) Citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training; g) Civic engagement activities which promote the quality of life in a community; and h) Other leadership activities that place youth in a leadership role such as serving on youth leadership committees, such as the One Stop Services Committee.
7	<u>Supportive Services***</u>	<p>20 CFR § 681.570 describes supportive services for youth as defined in WIOA Sec. 3(59), as services that enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities. These services include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Linkages to community services; b) Assistance with transportation; c) Assistance with childcare and dependent care; d) Assistance with housing; e) Assistance with educational testing; f) Reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities; g) Legal aid services; h) Referrals to health care; i) Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear; j) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in Postsecondary education classes; and k) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.
8	<u>Adult Mentoring</u>	<p>20 CFR § 681.490 states that adult mentoring must last at least 12 months and may take place both during the program and following exit from the program and be a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee. The final rule also states that while group mentoring activities and mentoring through electronic means are allowable as part of the mentoring activities, at a minimum, the local youth program must match the youth with an individual mentor with whom the youth interacts on a face-to-face basis. Mentoring may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company. Local programs should ensure appropriate processes are in place to adequately screen and select mentors.</p>

9	<u>Follow-Up Services***</u>	<p>20 CFR § 681.580 describes follow-up services as critical services provided following a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or postsecondary education and training. Follow-up services may include regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise. Follow-up services may begin immediately following the last expected date of service in the Youth program (and any other DOL program in which the participant is co-enrolled if the state is using a common exit policy as discussed in TEGL No. 10-16) when no future services are scheduled. Follow-up services do not cause the exit date to change and do not trigger re-enrollment in the program. The final rule also states that follow-up services for youth also may include the following program elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Supportive services; b) Adult mentoring; c) Financial literacy education; d) Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and e) Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. <p>Provision of these program elements must occur after the exit date in order to count as follow-up services. DOL recommends that when these services are provided as follow-up services they are coded as follow-up services in state/local management information systems as opposed to program services provided prior to program exit so that management information systems clearly differentiate follow-up services from those services provided prior to exit. In addition, such follow-up services should be documented in the case file that they were provided as follow-up services post exit.</p>
10	<u>Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling</u>	<p>20 CFR § 681.510 states that comprehensive guidance and counseling provides individualized counseling to participants. This includes drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs, as appropriate. ETA strongly encourages integrating mental health assessments into the objective assessment process to identify potential mental health needs that must be addressed through mental health services or through referrals to mental health professionals for youth to be successful in the program. Violence Prevention is also covered under this element. When referring participants to necessary counseling that cannot be provided by the local youth program or its service providers, the local youth program must coordinate with the organization it refers to ensure continuity of service. When resources exist within the local program or its service providers, it is allowable to provide counseling services directly to participants rather than refer youth to partner programs.</p> <p>TEGL 9-22 further reiterates that this program element should not be recorded for general case management. Additionally, activities such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services will be reported under element 13.</p>

11	<u>Financial Literacy Services</u>	<p>Per § 681.500 the financial literacy education program element may include activities which: a) Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions; b) Support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards; c) Teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores; what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information; how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies; and how to improve or maintain good credit; d) Support a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions; e) Educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identify theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and in other ways understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data; f) Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing the support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials; g) Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, including connecting them to benefits planning and work incentives counseling; h) Provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings; and i) Implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability by using high quality, age-appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including, where possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools, and instruction.</p>
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12	<u>Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training</u>	20 CFR § 681.560 states this program element provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship. Such skills may include, but are not limited to, the ability to take initiative; creatively seek out and identify business opportunities; develop budgets and forecast resource needs; understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas. Approaches to teaching youth entrepreneurial skills may include, but are not limited to: a) Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business. Entrepreneurship education programs often guide youth through the development of a business plan and also may include simulations of business start-up and operation; b) Enterprise development which provides supports and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping youth access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to the development of viable business ideas; and c) Experiential programs that provide youth with experience in the day-to-day operation of a business. These programs may involve the development of a youth-run business that young people participating in the program work in and manage. Or, they may facilitate placement in apprentice or internship positions with adult entrepreneurs in the community. Note: Per DOL, Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training is not considered "training" for inclusion in MSG or Credential Measures.
13	<u>Labor Market Information (LMI)</u>	Under 20 CFR § 681.460 (a)(13), this element includes "services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling/planning, and career exploration services." This element is not further described in the Youth section of the final rule; however, the Wagner-Peyser regulation at 20 CFR § 651.10 provides additional information about this element under the definition of workforce and labor market information. That section defines workforce and labor market information as "the body of knowledge that describes the relationship between labor demand and supply".
	<u>Referred to Employment/ Placement Assistance (STAFF ASSISTED)</u>	Individualized assistance by a career planner who matches a participant with existing job openings which are related to the participant's prior job experience or with the training program the individual has completed.

	<u>Vocational Exploration</u>	<p>Vocational Exploration is the process of learning about yourself and the world of work, identifying and exploring potentially satisfying occupations and developing an effective strategy to realize goals. This would include in-depth career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services which consist of:</p> <p>a) Career awareness begins the process of developing knowledge of the variety of careers and occupations available, their skill requirements, working conditions and training prerequisites, and job opportunities across a wide range of industry sectors.</p> <p>b) Career counseling or guidance provides advice and support in making decisions about what career paths to take. Services may include providing information about resume preparation, interview skills, potential opportunities for job shadowing, and the long-term benefits of postsecondary education and training (e.g., increased earning power and career mobility).</p> <p>c) Career exploration can be described as the process in which youth choose an educational path and training or a job that fits their interests, skills and abilities.</p>
	<u>Group Workforce Research/ Workshops/ Job Clubs</u>	<p>Workshops - Facilitator-led, organized workshop intended to provide participants with knowledge of labor market information, skills assessment, applications/resume preparation, interviewing techniques, and job search techniques to enhance their search for employment. Job Clubs - Provide resource materials on job openings and job search skills as well as descriptive materials about vocations and the skills sets that are required to successfully gain employment. They may also provide group activities which support participants in conducting an independent job search.</p>
14	<u>Post-Secondary Prep & Transition Activities</u>	<p>In 20 CFR § 681.460 (a)(14), the final program element is activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. This element is not further described in the final rule. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities and services prepare ISY and OSY for advancement to postsecondary education after attaining a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. These services include exploring postsecondary education options including technical training schools, community colleges, 4-year colleges and universities, and registered apprenticeship programs. Additional services include, but are not limited to, assisting youth to prepare for SAT/ACT testing; assisting with college admission applications; searching and applying for scholarships and grants; filling out the proper Financial Aid applications and adhering to changing guidelines; and connecting youth to postsecondary education programs.</p>

**Youth Program Proposal
Cover Sheet**

Name of Organization	
Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip Code	
Telephone Number	
Fax Number	
E-Mail Address	
TDD/TTY Number	
Organization's FEIN	
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, this proposal is complete and complies with the requirements of the Request for Proposal (RFP). The submission of this proposal has been authorized by the governing body of this organization.

Authorized Signature _____ Date _____

CONDITIONS / ASSURANCES

In submitting this proposal, the respondent must agree to follow and abide by the conditions/assurances stated below. Please read each item carefully and sign where indicated. ***Include this section in your submission.***

- 1) BEST, Inc. reserves the right to reject any and all proposals which are not complete or not prepared in accordance with RFP guidelines.
- 2) BEST, Inc. retains the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received in whole or in part, to negotiate with any qualified sources, or to conceal in whole or in part proposals if it is in the best interest of BEST, Inc. to do so. BEST, Inc. will require selected respondents to participate in contract negotiations should they be necessary.
- 3) The submission of a proposal does not commit BEST, Inc. to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal, or to procure or contract for services or supplies prior to the issuance of a signed contract.
- 4) The contents of proposals submitted will become part of any contract award.
- 5) Proprietary rights to all products, data, materials, and documentation originated and prepared pursuant to a contract shall belong exclusively to BEST, Inc.
- 6) Contractors will be prohibited from disseminating products developed under contract with BEST, Inc. without prior written consent.
- 7) Contractors must participate in project reporting, evaluation, and monitoring required or conducted by BEST, Inc.
- 8) The Contractor shall comply with the grievance and complaint procedure(s) contained in Section 181 (c) of WIOA, and any state-issued policy guidance.
- 9) The Contractor shall operate and comply with the project described in the proposal, which will be included as a part of the contract. Any deviation from the project as defined in this proposal must be approved in writing by BEST, Inc. Failure to gain such written approval shall constitute breach of contract. In the event of breach of contract, BEST, Inc. reserves the right to impose sanctions as deemed appropriate.
- 10) **All** funds received pursuant to this contract must be used exclusively for the proposed project. Any expenditures or performances that exceed those agreed to in the contract are the sole responsibility of the contractor and shall not entitle him/her to additional payments or benefits.
- 11) The Contractor shall inform BEST, Inc. in writing regarding the receipt of additional funding that may have an affect upon the provision, quality, or costs of providing services under this contract. BEST, Inc. retains the right to disapprove or renegotiate project costs based upon receipt of this information.

- 12) The Contractor agrees to permit BEST, Inc. or any of its authorized agents full access to and the right to examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records involving transactions related to the funding of this project as often as deemed necessary.
- 13) The Contractor must agree to hold BEST, Inc. and the Federal and State Governments harmless from liabilities arising from bodily injury, illness or damage of losses to person or property, or claims arising out of any activity under a WIOA contract.
- 14) The Contractor agrees to maintain record confidentiality as required. The Contractor also agrees to retain all records pertinent to this project for a period of five (5) years from the date of final contract payment or until pending matters of litigation, audit, or other related claims are resolved. This includes but is not limited to financial, statistical and participant records and supporting documentation.
- 15) The Contractor must be able to maintain control over the accountability for all WIOA funds received. The Contractor's financial management system must be able to provide for accurate, current, and complete disclosure of all project costs/expenditures and must maintain an individual account code system for tracking expenditures and reimbursement for all WIOA account activities.
- 16) The Contractor certifies that it possesses the legal authority to apply for WIOA funds, enter into any contract awarded and execute the proposed project.
- 17) The contracting organization agrees to comply with all Federal and State non-discrimination provisions. Specifically, upon receiving funding under the WIOA program, the contractor agrees that it will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, physical or mental ability, marital status, arrest or conviction records (whenever appropriate), national origin, political affiliation, veteran status, or for persons with AIDS or HIV infection.
- 18) The Contractor agrees to meet all of the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- 19) The Contractor agrees to meet all applicable labor laws, including Child Labor Law standards.
- 20) The Contractor affirms that it is not on any Federal, State of Illinois or local Debarment List.
- 21) This program is subject to the provisions of the "Jobs for Veterans Act", Public Law 107-288, which provides priority of service to veterans and spouses of certain veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services in any job-training program directly funded, in whole, or in part by the Department of Labor. Please note that, to obtain priority service, a veteran must meet the program's eligibility requirements. ETA Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 5-03 (September 16, 2003) provides general guidance on the scope of veterans priority statute and its effect on current employment and training programs.
- 22) Any non-expendable personal property (equipment and other personal property of a tangible nature having a useful life of more than one (1) year and having an acquisition cost of \$300.00 or

more) to be purchased with funds from this grant **must** be approved by BEST, Inc. **prior** to purchase. The item(s) remains the property of BEST, Inc. and is subject to BEST, Inc. inventory controls. This includes items such as computers, printers, and furniture. Upon completion of the grant, this equipment will be retrieved by BEST, Inc.

- 23) The contractor agrees that any press releases, newspaper articles, public service announcements, presentations, written reports or other such materials that provides information about this project in a public manner must recognize BEST, Inc./NCI Works as the funding agency.
- 24) Sub-recipients/contractors must have:
- A financial management system in place to track and record grant expenditures (i.e. QuickBooks, Sage MIP);
 - Oversight provided by a Board;
 - Registered at Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPHS) and System for Award Management (SAM) websites, and;
 - Not been debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs or activities.

Signature

Date

Name of Authorized Representative

Title

Project Participant Plan

For Program Year 2026 (July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027)

Projected New Enrollments	Projected Participants Carried Forward from Previous Project (if applicable)*	Anticipated Completions

*If there are participants carried forward from a previous project, please explain in your narrative the reason(s) why they were unable to complete.

FISCAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name/Title of person(s) responsible for bookkeeping, billing, record-keeping and reporting relative to this project:

2. Are all persons responsible for fiscal matters bonded? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "yes", name of bond carrier: _____

3. Has any officer of your agency ever been convicted of fraud or embezzlement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If "yes", please explain: _____

4. Does your agency have written guidelines for fiscal management? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. List the control ledgers/journals and any subsidiary registers or books of accounts used by your agency:

6. Does your agency maintain a general liability or other type of insurance policy that will hold BEST, Inc. harmless from liabilities arising from bodily injury, illness, or other damages or losses of person or property, or any claims arising out of any activity under a WIOA contract or agreement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. What is your DUN's number? _____

8. Do you have a negotiated indirect cost rate? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, the rate is: _____

Budget Information Summary

Enter total funding requested from each separate worksheet

Indirect Costs

	Funding Request	In-Kind	Total
Personnel Wages			
Personnel Fringe Benefits			
Personnel Travel			
Indirect Program Costs			
Direct Program Costs			
Total			

1. Personnel Budget Worksheet

Cost for personnel who are directly involved with the project. Under payment schedule, note method of payment (monthly, bi-monthly, weekly)

Convert salary to hourly rates

Position	Payment Schedule	Hourly Rate	Number of Hours Per Weeks (WIOA)	Number of Weeks	Total Charged to WIOA
Total Personnel					

Please Note: A copy of the signed employment Agreement/Contract for each Personnel that BEST, Inc. will reimburse for must be sent to the BEST, Inc. Fiscal Office at 815 N. Orlando Smith Avenue, Oglesby, IL 61348 prior to receiving any reimbursement for staff wages and benefits. Signed timesheets will be required of all employees paid with WIOA funds. The timesheets will reflect total hours worked, itemized by WIOA Hours and Other Hours at a minimum.

[illegible]

2. Fringe Benefits Worksheet

Benefit	Rate %	Total WIOA Salary	Total
FICA			
Worker Compensation			
Unemployment Insurance			
Health & Life Insurance			
Retirement			
Other (Specify below)			
Other (Specify below)			
Total Training Fringe Cost			

3. Travel Budget Worksheet

Staff Travel Costs

Mileage _____ per mile X _____ # of Miles = _____

Staff Travel Costs

Mileage _____ per mile X _____ # of Miles = _____

Total Travel

Mileage _____ per mile X _____ # of Miles = _____

Mileage reimbursement for staff travel should reflect the current rate approved by your agency. If the mileage rate for your agency is based on the Federal Standard Rate, change in rate is allowable per the Federal Standard Mileage Rate in effect.

4. Indirect Program Costs Budget Worksheet

Costs Items	Funding Requested
Training Facility	
Rent/Usage Fee	
Utilities	
Telephone	
Postage	
Printer/Copier	
Office Supplies	
Equipment Rental (List below the equipment to be leased or for which usage allowance will be billed. No purchases allowed with RFP funds)	
Meeting Costs (List below the costs associated with the orientation meeting and any other group program meetings)	
In-Service Costs (List below the costs associated with In-Service Training of Staff)	
Other Costs (List below any other expenses not included above. Specify below the cost for each additional item)	
Total Program Costs	

5. Direct Training Program Costs

Costs Items	Funding Requested
Incentive Funds	
Advanced Academic Training (Please explain)	
Instructional Software/Books	
Work Experience	
Other Costs (List below any other expenses not included above. Specify below the cost for each additional item)	
Total Direct Raining Program Costs	

6. In-Kind Contributions Budget Worksheet

List any In-Kind costs your agency is willing to contribute

Item	Costs
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Program Costs	
Total	

PART VI
STATE OF ILLINOIS REQUIRED
CERTIFICATIONS

The Grantee makes the following certifications as a condition of this Agreement. These certifications are required by State statute and are in addition to any certifications required by any federal funding source as set forth in this Agreement. Grantee's execution of this Agreement shall serve as its attestation that the certification made herein are true and correct.

6.1 Compliance with Applicable Law. The Grantee certifies that it shall comply with all applicable provisions of Federal, State and local law in the performance of its obligations pursuant to this Agreement.

6.2 Unemployment Insurance. Grantee certifies that:

☐ It has an Illinois Unemployment Insurance Account Number and that said number is _____ or

☐ It does not have an Illinois Unemployment Insurance Account Number for the following reason(s):

If the Grantee has an Illinois Unemployment Insurance Account Number, it certifies that it is not delinquent in the payment of Unemployment Insurance contributions, payments in lieu of contributions, penalties and/or interest, nor does it owe any sums to the Department of Employment Security because of overpaid unemployment insurance benefits. Grantee further certifies that Grantee's Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) set forth in the Notice of Grant Award is the same number that Grantee has supplied to IDES for unemployment insurance purposes. If, for any reason, the FEIN the Grantee has supplied for unemployment insurance purposes changes, the Grantee will immediately notify the Department of Employment Security of the new FEIN, in writing, by telefacsimile sent in care of the Office of Legal Counsel at (312) 793-2164, with such notice to include reference to the Grant number assigned to this Grant Agreement; upon receipt of such notice, all further payments under this grant shall be processed under the new FEIN. Grantee hereby acknowledges that to the extent allowable by applicable federal laws and regulation, the State shall have the right and the Grantee authorizes the State to withhold from any sum or sums due otherwise payable pursuant to this Grant Agreement the overpaid benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act, and may apply the amount so withheld toward satisfaction of any such past due contributions, payments in lieu of contributions, penalties and/or interest or overpaid benefits.

- 6.3 Bid-Rigging/Bid-Rotating. The Grantee certifies that it has not been barred from contracting with a unit of State or local government as a result of a violation of Section 33E-3 or 33E-4 of the Criminal Code of 1961 (720ILCS 5/33 E-3 and 5/33 E-4).
- 6.4 Default on Educational Loan. The grantee certifies that this Agreement is not in violation of the Educational Loan Default Act (5 ILCS 385/3) prohibiting certain contracts to individuals who are in default on an educational loan.
- 6.5 Americans with Disabilities Act. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et. seq.) and the regulations thereunder (28 CFR 35.130) prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities by the State, whether directly or through contractual arrangements, in the provision of any aid, benefit or service. As a condition of receiving this grant, the Grantee certifies that services, programs and activities provided under this Agreement are, and will continue to be, in compliance with the ADA.
- 6.6 Drugfree Workplace Act. The Grantee certifies that:
- A) ☐ It is a Corporation, Partnership, or other entity (other than an individual) with 24 or fewer employees at the time of execution of this Agreement.
 - B) ☐ That the purpose of this grant is to fund solid waste reduction.
 - C) ☐ It is a Corporation, Partnership, or other entity (other than an individuals with 25 or more employees at the time of execution of this Agreement, or
 - D) ☐ That it is an individual.

If Option “A” or “B” is checked, this Agreement is not subject to the requirements of the Act.

If Option “C” or “D” is checked and the amount of this grant is five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) or more, the Grantee is notified that the Drugfree Workplace Act (30 ILCS 580/1 et. seq.) is applicable to this Agreement, and the Grantee must comply with the terms of said Act, as set forth below:

Grantee will provide a drugfree workplace by:

- (a) Publishing a statement:
 - (i) Notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, including cannabis, is prohibited in the Grantee’s workplace.

- (ii) Specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition.
 - (iii) Notifying the employee that, as a condition of employment on such grant, the employee will:
 - (A) abide by the terms of the statement; and
 - (B) notify the employer of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days after such conviction.
- (b) Establishing a drugfree awareness program to inform employees about:
 - (i) the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
 - (ii) the Grantee's policy of maintaining a drugfree workplace;
 - (iii) any available drug counseling, rehabilitation and employee assistance programs; and
 - (iv) the penalties that may be imposed upon an employee for drug violations.
- (c) Providing a copy of the statement required by subparagraph (a) to each employee engaged in the performance of the grant and to post the statement in a prominent place in the workplace.
- (d) Notifying the granting agency within ten (10) days after receiving notice, under Part (B) of paragraph (iii) of subsection (a) above, from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction.
- (e) Imposing a sanction on, or requiring the satisfactory participation in, a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program by any employee who is so convicted, as required by Section 5 of the Drugfree Workplace Act, 30 ILCS 580/5.
- (f) Assisting employees in selecting a course of action in the event drug counseling, treatment and rehabilitation are required and indicating that a trained referral team is in place.
- (g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drugfree workplace through implementation of the Drugfree Workplace Act, 30 ILCS 580/5.

If Grantee is an individual, it certifies that it will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the performance of this Agreement.

6.7 Anti-Bribery. The Grantee certifies that neither it nor its employees have been convicted of bribing or attempting to bribe an officer or employee of the State of Illinois, nor has Grantee or any of its employees made an admission of guilt of such conduct which is a matter of record as defined in the Illinois Procurement Code (30 ILCS 500 et. seq.).

6.8 Discrimination/Illinois Human Rights Act. The Grantee certifies (i) that it will not commit unlawful discrimination in employment in Illinois as that term is defined in Article 2 of said Act; (ii) that it will comply with the provisions of Article 5 of the Act regarding equal employment opportunities and affirmative action; and, (iii) that it will comply with policies and procedures established by the Department of Human Rights under Article 7 of the Act regarding equal employment opportunities and affirmative action.

The Grantee further certifies that, if applicable, it will comply with “An act to prohibit discrimination and intimidation on account of race, creed, color, sex, religion, physical or mental handicap unrelated to ability or national origin in employment under contracts for public buildings or public works.” (775 ILCS 10/0.01 et. seq.).

6.9 Sexual Harassment. The Grantee certifies that it has written sexual harassment policies that shall include, at a minimum, the following information: (i) the illegality of sexual harassment; (ii) the definition of sexual harassment under State law; (iii) a description of sexual harassment, utilizing examples; (iv) the Grantee’s internal complaint process including penalties; (v) the legal recourse, investigative and complaint process available through the Department of Human Rights and the Human Rights Commission; (vi) directions on how to contact the Department and Commission and, (vii) protection against retaliation as provided by Section 6-101 of the Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/2-105 (B)(5)). A copy of the policies shall be provided to the Department upon request.

6.10 International Anti-Boycott Certification. The Grantee hereby certifies that neither the Grantee nor any substantially owned affiliate company of the Grantee is participating or will participate in an international boycott, as defined by the provisions of the U.S. Export Administration Act of 1979, or as defined by the regulations of the U.S. Department of Commerce, promulgated pursuant to that Act (30 ILCS 582/1 et. seq.).

Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting this proposal, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The inability of a person to provide the certification required below will not necessarily result in denial of participation in this covered transaction. The prospective participant shall submit an explanation of why it cannot provide the certification set out below. The certification or explanation will be considered in connection with the Department of Labor's (DOL) determination whether to enter into this transaction. However, failure of the prospective primary participant to furnish a certification or an explanation shall disqualify such person from participation in this transaction.
3. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when the DOL determined to enter into this transaction. If it is later determined that the prospective primary participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the DOL may terminate this transaction for cause or default.
4. The prospective primary participant shall provide immediate written notice to the DOL if at any time the prospective primary participant learns its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
5. The terms "covered transaction", "debarred", "suspended", "ineligible", "lower tier covered transaction", "participant", "person", "primary covered transaction", "principal", "proposal", and "voluntarily excluded", as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the DOL for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
6. The prospective primary participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the DOL.
7. The prospective primary participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions," provided by the DOL, without modification, in all lower tier-covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier-covered transactions.
8. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the

eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties From Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs.

9. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
10. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 6 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier-covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the DOL may terminate this transaction for cause of default.

Vendor's Federal Taxpayer Identification Number

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that _____ is my correct Federal Taxpayer Identification Number. I am doing business as a (*please check one*):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate Agent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sole Proprietorship | <input type="checkbox"/> Government Entity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Exempt Organization (IRC 501 (a) only) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation | <input type="checkbox"/> Trust or Estate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical and Health Care Services Provider Corporation | |

Signed

Date

Enter your taxpayer identification number in the appropriate space. For individuals and sole proprietors, this is your social security number. For other entities, it is your employer identification number. Federal Employer Identification Numbers (FEINs) must not be used for sole proprietorships.

If you do not have a TIN, apply for one immediately. To apply, get form SS-5, Application for a Social Security Number Card (for individuals) from your local Social Security Administration, or form SS-4, Application for Employer Identification Number (for businesses and all other entities), from your local Internal Revenue office.

To complete the certification if you do not have a TIN, fill out the certification indicating that a TIN has been applied for, sign and date the form, and return it to this agency. As soon as you receive your TIN, sign and date the form, and give it to this agency.

If you fail to furnish your correct TIN to this agency, you are subject to an IRS penalty of \$50.00 for each such failure unless your failure is due to reasonable cause and not to willful neglect.

WILLFULLY FALSIFYING CERTIFICATIONS OR AFFIRMATIONS MAY SUBJECT YOU TO CRIMINAL PENALTIES INCLUDING FINES AND/OR IMPRISONMENT.

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

**CERTIFICATION FOR CONTRACTS, GRANTS, LOANS, AND
COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS**

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form LLL, Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying, in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all* sub-awards at all tiers (including subcontracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all* sub-recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000.00 for each such failure.

Grantee/Contractor Organization

WIOA TITLE/AGREEMENT NO.

Name of Certifying Official

Signature

Date

*Note: In these instances, "All", in the Final Rule is expected to be clarified to show that it applies to covered contract/grant transactions over \$100,000.00 (per OMB).

**Certification Regarding
Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters
Primary Covered Transactions**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, Participants= responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988, Federal Register (pages 19160-19211).

(BEFORE SIGNING CERTIFICATION, READ ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS WHICH ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CERTIFICATION)

- (1) The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:
- (a) are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;
 - (b) have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgement rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
 - (c) are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity (Federal, State, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1) (b) of this certification; and
 - (d) have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default.
- (2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Name of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Signature

Date