

**NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

for

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
ONE-STOP OPERATOR, and YOUTH, ADULT,
DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICE PROVIDER**

Program Year July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Release Date: April 11, 2017

Introduction to the Local Area

The Workforce Development Board of Northwest Arkansas covers a nine-county local area made up of Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Madison, Marion, Newton, Searcy and Washington county leaders from business, education, labor and government, with the majority of its board members representing the private business sector.

The vision of the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board is to have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working in order to keep Arkansas's economy competitive in the global marketplace.

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (NWAEDD) is the Fiscal Agent, Administrative Entity and Staff Support to the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Northwest Arkansas Certified Development Company (NWACDC) is the current provider for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. More information can be found at <http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents>.

The Workforce Development Board of Northwest Arkansas is committed to:

- Developing an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.
- Enhancing service delivery to employers and jobseekers.
- Increasing awareness of the State's Talent Development System.
- Addressing skills gaps.

Data related to the nine-county area can be found in the current Transitional Regional and Local Plan at <http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents>.

Technical Details

This Request for Qualifications was prepared based upon the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) and associated U.S. Department of Labor Regulations and guidance. This Federal Law was implemented to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States. WIOA provides the framework for a national workforce preparation system that is flexible, responsive, customer-focused, and locally managed. Mandatory core program partners include: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation, along with required partners specified in the Act. Offerors are strongly encouraged to read Training and Employment Guidance

Letter 04-15 issued by the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines the vision for the One-Stop system under WIOA.

The three hallmarks of WIOA include:

1. The needs of businesses and workers drive workforce solutions, and local boards are accountable for this within the communities they serve.
2. One-Stop Centers provide excellent customer-centric services and focus on continuous improvement; and,
3. The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

WIOA is built around the following key principles:

- Increase access and opportunity, particularly for those individuals with barriers to employment, to ensure success in the labor market.
- Support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system.
- Improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages, and to provide employers with the skilled workers they need to succeed in a global economy.
- Promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services to better address the employment and skill needs of workers, jobseekers, and employers.
- Increase the prosperity of workers and employers and the economic growth of communities, regions, and states, and the global competitiveness of the United States.
- Provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase the employment, retention and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants.

The Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board (Board) oversees the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds for the nine-county area.

In Section 107 of the legislation and in § 678.605 of WIOA Regulations Local Workforce Boards are required to competitively procure the One-Stop Operator role and responsibilities. The Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board has contracted with an independent consultant to assist a Board Procurement Task Force in soliciting and selecting a One-Stop Operator and a Title I Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Service Provider. The hiring of an independent contractor to conduct the procurement is required, as the agency that provides Board support may be submitting qualifications to compete for the One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider role and responsibilities.

Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board, with the release of this Request for Qualifications, is soliciting submittals to identify a single One-Stop Operator for the Northwest Arkansas comprehensive One-Stop Centers:

- Arkansas Workforce Center at Mountain Home (comprehensive)
1058 Highland Circle #20
Mountain Home, Arkansas 72653
- Arkansas Workforce Center at Harrison (comprehensive)
818 Highway 62-65-412 N.
Harrison, Arkansas 72601
- Arkansas Workforce Center at Fayetteville (comprehensive)
2143 W. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
- Arkansas Workforce Center at Rogers (comprehensive)
100 N. Dixieland Suite 81-5
Rogers, Arkansas 72756
- Arkansas Workforce Center at Siloam Springs (comprehensive)
809 S. Mount Olive
Siloam Springs, Arkansas 72761

The Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board in coordination with Chief Elected Officials and its partners are responsible for determining the locations of the Workforce Centers.

Purpose of Request for Qualifications

The purpose of this solicitation is to select a single service provider to serve as One-Stop Operator and Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and to lead Business Services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 for the Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Area.

A Request for Qualifications is being used due to the fact the Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Board knows what it wants from a service provider and the Board is looking for how a vendor responds to the requirements and experience.

Background and General Information

- A. The Board intends to be as inclusive as possible in this solicitation. The goal is to receive a wide variety of high quality, innovative submittals that meet the workforce development needs of the communities served in Northwest Arkansas.
- B. The resulting contract with the Successful Offeror will be for a one-year-period, July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. Based on performance, the Board may extend the contract annually for up to a total of four years as allowed in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Contract extensions may be based on funding availability,

satisfactory performance, and other factors determined appropriate by the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Officials. Notice for contract renewal will be made at the start of the fourth quarter each program year. Competitive procurement is required at least every four years according to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- C. Once the contract has been awarded, the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board, in collaboration with the Chief Elected Officials, reserves the right to modify delivery design. In the event the modification requires additional labor hours on the part of the Successful Offeror terms will be negotiated and the contract modified. The Board also reserves the right to de-obligate funds from the Successful Offeror if it fails to meet contractual requirements.
- D. Funding for this Request for Qualifications will vary, depending upon final allocations, number of participants to be served, services proposed and negotiated. Offerors must serve Adults, Youth and Dislocated Workers in all nine counties in Northwest Arkansas. The Successful Offeror will lead Business Services and the integrated business services team throughout the nine-county area.
- E. The Board reserves the right to make an award based on the criteria in this Request for Qualifications or to make no awards, if that is deemed to serve the best interests of the Board and Northwest Arkansas. The submittal process is competitive and follows government procurement rules.
- F. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 provides the framework for a national workforce preparation system that is flexible, responsive, customer-focused and locally managed. The Board envisions a system that meets the needs of residents and businesses alike.
- G. This Request for Qualifications is not in itself an offer of work nor does it commit the Board to fund any submittals. The Board is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation or research involved in the development of the response to this Request for Qualifications.
- H. Offerors may be asked to answer questions electronically during the review process of this Request for Qualifications.
- I. All commitments made by the Board as a result of this Request for Qualifications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the Board reserves the right to award an amount less than the total funds available.
- J. The Board assures it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 law and the related regulations; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. This assurance applies to the WIOA

Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements that the Board makes to carry out the WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

- K. By providing a submittal to this Request for Qualifications all Offerors are providing an assurance that they will comply with the above nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.
- L. Offerors should note that under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, the contents of submittals to the Board is subject to public release upon request, except those items specifically exempt from disclosure. The Offeror shall mark as "proprietary" those parts of its submittal that it deems proprietary. However, the Offeror is alerted that this marking is advisory only and not binding on the Board. If there is a request under the Freedom of Information Act to inspect any part of the submittal so marked, the Board will advise the Offeror and request further justification in support of the "proprietary" marking. If the Board determines, after receipt of the justification, that the material is releasable, the Offeror will be notified immediately. Under no circumstances will a submittal or any part of a submittal be released prior to the contract award decision.
- M. The Board will authorize the Administrative Entity to negotiate a contract and/or agreement for the provision of programs arising from this Request for Qualifications.
- N. The Successful Offeror is required to maintain a local management office within one of the comprehensive One-Stop Centers and provide detail on how each location will be staffed and managed.
- O. The Successful Offeror may not subcontract any part of the services unless approved in the Request for Qualifications and/or approved in advance by the Local Administrative Entity.
- P. The Successful Offeror must assure that it will provide additional services that may become necessary as a result of new grants such as National Emergency Grants or other State or Federally funded workforce programs granted to Northwest Arkansas.
- Q. The Successful Offeror must assure that it will comply with Local, State, and Federal program and fiscal monitoring requests.
- R. Offerors are prohibited from discussing this Request for Qualifications with Board Members, the Independent Contractor facilitating the procurement process, or Local Chief Elected Officials. Such contact will result in disqualification of the response. A question period is provided within the Request for Qualifications timeline.
- S. Offerors assure that local management will be hired from and remain a resident of the Northwest Arkansas nine-county area.
- T. Offerors who have provided a submittal may protest the award of the contract according to the following process:

1. Protests must be filed electronically and be received by the Board's consultant at malaw528@aol.com by May 29, 2017. All protests are public information after the protest period ends.
2. All protests must state the basis for the protest in clear terms and provide an alternative the protester finds acceptable. The basis of the protest must be a violation of a State or Federal contracting law, rule, or regulation applicable to the contracting process.
3. The independent consultant will forward all protests to the Board Procurement Task Force and provide detail on whether the protests meet the above conditions.
4. During any part of the review or consideration, the protester may be asked to clarify or amplify statements or to provide proof of claims or other statements. Any such requests must be fully responded to within the time designated by the Board Procurement Task Force within the request. In the event a protester fails to respond, the protest will be dismissed and no further protest will be accepted relative to this Request for Qualifications.
5. The Board Procurement Task Force will review the protest and will issue a written response that is intended as a complete and final answer to the protest. A response will be issued no later than June 2, 2017.
6. The Board Procurement Task Force will document the submission of a protest and the findings in meeting minutes and report its finding to the full Board.

U. The State of Arkansas has established statewide performance measures. Negotiated performance measures for PY 16 and 17 that will be tracked and met or exceeded by the Successful Offeror are as follows:

- Employment (2nd Qtr after Exit)
 - Adult 82.5%
 - Dislocated Worker 77.0%
 - Youth 75%
- Employment (4th Qtr after Exit)
 - Adult 78.0%
 - Dislocated Worker 74.5%
 - Youth 71.2%
- Median Earnings (2nd Qtr after Exit)
 - Adult \$5,842
 - Dislocated Worker \$6,400
- Credential Attainment Rate
 - Adult 75.3%
 - Dislocated Worker 75.0%
 - Youth 70.0%

Resource Information

Offerors may get helpful background information from the Transitional and Regional Local Plan provided to the State of Arkansas by the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board. The plan can be found at

<http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents>

Attachments to the Local Plan providing partner information and service locations can be found at <http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents>.

The United States Department of Labor has a WIOA Online Community of Practice that provides information sharing needed to implement and maintain WIOA at:

<http://on.workforcegps.org>.

WIOA law and regulations can be found at: www.doleta.gov/wioa/

Arkansas's WIOA Combined State Plan can be found at:

<http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/AWDB/pdfs/public%20comment/Draft%20State%20Plan%20for%20Public%20Comment%202-8-2016.pdf>

The current local Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement will be revised to meet WIOA requirements once State guidance is provided. A copy of the current documents are at <http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents>.

RFP Timeline *(any changes to this schedule will be communicated by posting on the website and by emailing organizations who submitted an intent to apply.*

4/11/17	Request for Qualifications Released and Posted on http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents
4/18/17	Letter of Intent Due to Mary Ann Lawrence at malaw528@aol.com
4/18/17	Deadline for Questions to Mary Ann Lawrence at malaw528@aol.com
4/21/17	Questions and Answers Released and Posted on http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents
5/11/17	Proposals Due Electronically to Mary Ann Lawrence at malaw528@aol.com
5/17/17	Committee Evaluation and Recommendation
By 5/24/17	Full Board or Executive Committee Approval and Chief Elected Official Approval
5/24/17	Award Announcement
By 6/05/17	Negotiate and Finalize Contract
7/1/17	Contract Start Date

Eligible Applicants

Organizations eligible to respond to this Request for Qualifications may fall within any of the following categories:

- Governmental Agencies
- Private Non-Profit Organizations
- Private For-Profit Businesses
- Educational Entities (other than elementary and secondary schools)

One-Stop Operator Roles and Responsibilities

The One-Stop Operator must coordinate the service delivery of core and required one-stop partners and other partners working with the comprehensive Workforce Centers. This includes managing partner responsibilities in the comprehensive One-Stop Centers as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The WIOA MOU serves the key purpose of defining partner roles and focuses, in part, on the shaping of the workforce system. This includes the sharing of resources, referral agreements, etc. In the end, the overall goal is to ensure efficiency within the Northwest Arkansas workforce system.

WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014, and went into effect July 1, 2015. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WIOA has two tiers of partners: Core Program Partners and Required Partners.

The Core Program Partners who are required to collaborate and participate in the One-Stop System include: WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth; Wagner-Peyser labor exchange; Adult Education and Literacy; and, Vocational Rehabilitation. Core Program Partners are in the common performance measures pool and must work closely together to achieve success.

Required Program Partners must participate in the MOU process and provide coordinated services with the comprehensive Workforce Centers. Required Program Partners include the four Core Program Partners as well as: Career and Technical Education, Title V Older Americans, Job Corps, Native American Programs, Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Veterans, Youthbuild, Trade Act, Community Services Block Grant, HUD, Unemployment Compensation, Second Chance, and TANF. In the event any of the required partners do not have funding in the Northwest Arkansas Local Workforce Development Area, their participation is waived.

Providing businesses with the skilled workforce they need to compete in the global, regional, and local economies is central to Arkansas's vision in implementing the Federal Act. Arkansas's workforce system provides a talent pipeline through the establishment of partnerships between State and local entities, businesses,

economic development, education, and community stakeholders. To ensure that the workforce system efficiently meets the needs of both the businesses and the jobseekers that it serves, Arkansas's workforce agencies have jointly developed the State's workforce plan with the intent that this vision is carried out in each of the Local Workforce Development Areas through their Workforce Centers.

The One-Stop Operator will be the point of contact regarding issues pertaining to customer complaints that are substantive to the required partners operating in the comprehensive and affiliate One-Stop Centers. This will include convening partner meetings on a regular basis as well as stakeholder meetings including all core program partners and advising the Administrative Entity and Board Staff on partner operational challenges and successes.

In support of the WIOA MOU the One-Stop Operator responsibilities will also include:

- Coordinating service delivery among partners
- Managing hours of operation at the comprehensive Centers
- Facilitating customer flow, customer service, initial assessment, resource room usage, tracking, and referral processes are carried out as agreed upon in the WIOA MOU
- Communicating Board and Administrative policies and procedures to all partners
- Reporting to the Administration and Board on Center activities

The One-Stop Operator will submit a written and verbal report on work accomplished and challenges encountered on a quarterly basis to the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board. In addition, the One-Stop Operator will gather data for the Board from the partners on a quarterly basis including: common measure information; tracking incoming clients; resource room usage; and program specific referrals as outlined in the WIOA MOU.

Offerors assure that local management will be hired from and remain a resident of the Northwest Arkansas nine-county area.

WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Delivery Roles and Responsibilities

The Successful Offeror will provide jobseeker services for WIOA Title I Adults and Dislocated Workers. While the One-Stop Operator plays a key role in basic career service coordination and delivery, the Successful Offeror will be a core program partner in regard to basic career services and will be the service provider for WIOA Title I Adults and Dislocated Workers including individualized career services and training services.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities, according to the WIOA, include: eligibility determination, outreach and intake, initial assessment of skills, supportive service needs, job search and placement assistance, career counseling, provision of

information on in-demand occupations and non-traditional employment, recruitment and other business services for employers, referrals to other One-Stop partner programs and other available programs in the communities, provision of labor market information, information on supportive services available through other programs, information and assistance with establishing eligibility for financial aid and assistance for educational programs other than WIOA, comprehensive skills assessments, in-depth interviewing and evaluation of barriers to employment, development of an Individual Employment Plan, group counseling, career planning, short-term prevocational services, soft skills training, work experience, financial literacy, out of area job search, training services, occupational skills training, supportive services, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, private sector training programs, skill upgrading and retraining, job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities and follow-up services.

WIOA Title I Youth Service Delivery Roles and Responsibilities

Offerors must expend at least 75% of youth funds for out-of-school youth and up to 25% for in-school youth based on youth development principles and best practices that support, motivate, and prepare youth for continuing educational achievements, successful transition into adulthood, and long-term success in employment. The services design and implementation strategies must be appropriate, provide a customized mix of services to address individual needs and goals, and lead to attainment of the performance measures for in-school and out-of-school youth.

Under the WIOA, Youth funds contracted to the service provider for eligible youth shall be used to carry out programs that:

1. Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant.
2. Provide service strategies for each participant.
3. Provide activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized post-secondary credential.
4. Provide preparation for post-secondary educational and training opportunities.
5. Provide strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that lead to the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials.
6. Provide preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases.
7. Provide effective connections to employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the regional labor market.

Youth programs must provide the fourteen elements listed below either through direct service, community referrals, or direct purchase:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent

(including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:
 - a. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available through the school year.
 - b. Pre-apprenticeship programs.
 - c. Internships and job shadowing.
 - d. On-the-job training opportunities.
4. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority considerations for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.
7. Supportive services.
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.
9. Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
11. Financial literacy education.
12. Entrepreneurial skills training.
13. 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.
14. Activities that help you prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

Business Services Lead Roles and Responsibilities

The focal point of the workforce system is business and industry. The Successful Offeror will be the lead and work with a local business services team comprised of partner agencies to provide business development and job development activities. These activities are taking place in Northwest Arkansas and may include:

- **Access to Facilities** – use of Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as meetings, trainings, orientations, interviews, etc.
- **Assessments** – any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills, interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee.
- **Business Education** – seminars, round tables, workshops, focus groups, etc.
- **Business Information** – information given to a business pertaining to a variety of incentive programs or other information requested that provides a benefit to that business.
- **Hiring Events** – a customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions.
- **Job Fairs** – event for multiple employers that assists with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions.
- **Job Postings** – staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff.
- **Labor Market Information** – information on state and local labor market conditions, industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce, area business identified skills needs, employer wage and benefit trends, short and long-term industry and occupational projections, worker supply and demand, and job vacancies survey results.
- **Rapid Response** – a variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring or downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition, job placement assistance, and information on unemployment benefits.
- **Screening** – any service that involves the initial evaluation of applications or resumes that assists the employer in the recruiting process.
- **Training and Retraining** – any service provided to a business that involves the training or retraining of current or future employees including on-the-job training, work experience, incumbent worker training, etc.

Project Budget

Budget figures for July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 are not available at this time. Offerors should provide a staffing and costs proposal that demonstrates an understanding and qualification for their submittal. Direct client services such as on-the-job training, work experience, and supportive services should be included in your sample calculations. The Offeror will receive a limited amount of admin dollars to cover administrative functions as required by the WIOA. The bulk of admin dollars are used by the Fiscal Agent, Administrative Entity, and Board support. Center rental expenses including phone charges for this year paid by the Title I Service Provider have been:

- Harrison: \$2,651.31
- Mountain Home: \$1,425.98
- Fayetteville: \$2,018.10
- Rogers: \$1,685.06
- Siloam Springs: \$2,081.59

Use the above figures in your budget detail. The current approximate figures for the services requested are:

- PY 2016 Youth Activities Funding: \$868,157
- PY 2016 Adult Activities Funding: \$777,833
- PY 2016 Dislocated Worker Activities Funding: \$663,360
- Business services is included in both of the above figures

Offerors should plan on 80% of these funds for the sample budget calculations.

Submission Information and Requirements

General Submission Information

To be considered for funding, an entity must provide a submittal for this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) including supporting documentation in accordance with the instructions in this RFQ. When evaluating a submittal, the Board Procurement Task Force will consider how well the Offeror has complied with these instructions and provided the required information. The Board Procurement Task Force reserves the right to request clarifications from any Offeror regarding information in their submittals and may request an oral presentation if deemed appropriate and necessary to make a final recommendation.

Offerors may request clarification to comply with instructions during the Question and Answer period April 11, 2017 through April 18, 2017 by emailing Mary Ann Lawrence at malaw528@aol.com. The Board's Procurement Task Force will discuss and respond to all questions by April 21, 2017 and post the answers on <http://nwaedd.org/services/workforce/workforce-board/documents>. Offerors shall not direct questions or have conversations regarding this Request for Qualifications with any Board Members, Chief Elected Officials, the Consultant, or

Northwest Arkansas Board support staff except during the official "question" period. All questions must be communicated through malaw528@aol.com. Questions submitted should be electronic and include in the subject line *Questions – Northwest Arkansas Operator & Service Procurement*. Questions without the assigned subject line may not be considered.

The submittal, as well as any reference materials presented, must be typed in English in at least 12-point font and must be on standard portrait 8 ½ " by 11" size with no less than one inch margins. Landscape orientation containing charts, spreadsheets, and oversize exhibits is permissible. Submittals are limited to thirty pages or less including attachments and supportive information on single side of paper.

Contract Funding Source

Funding is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and is administered by Northwest Planning & Development District on behalf of the Chief Elected Officials in Northwest Arkansas in partnership with the State of Arkansas.

Compliance Requirements

Any award of a contract under this Request for Qualifications will be subject to applicable requirements of the funding sources, including the U.S. Department of Labor, the State of Arkansas, and the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board. These terms and conditions include, without limitation, provisions regarding reporting, insurance, indemnification, audits, nondiscrimination, minority and women's business enterprise requirements, veterans' priority of service, conflict of interest and local hiring provisions.

Available Funds Note

It is suggested that the Successful Offeror has a minimum of three months operating capital on-hand throughout the term of the contract.

Public Records

Offerors are advised that documents in possession of the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Development Board are considered public records and subject to disclosure under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

Contractor Qualifications and Responsibilities

All businesses/organizations must meet a minimum level of administrative and fiscal capacity in order to contract for the requested services. Therefore, the Successful Offeror must provide the following Documentation of Qualifications within a ten-day period after notification. Failure to satisfactorily provide the following documentation could result in disqualification of proposed award.

Documentation of Organization's Qualifications:

- Legal entity - Proof of Incorporation, 501(c) (3), etc. and designation from the IRS of tax-exempt status, if applicable. Must submit document proving legal entity.

- Written personnel policies. Must submit table of contents of personnel policies.
- Written conflict of interest policy for staff and board. Must submit copy of Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Have an ongoing quality assurance process for services. Must submit description of process.
- For organizations that have more than one revenue source, must submit revenue documentation identifying the various sources of the amounts.
- Proven fiscal capacity including capacity for fund accounting. Must submit bound copy of most recent formal audit completed within last year. Must satisfactorily address all findings.
- Verify that the program has procured and will maintain during the life of the contract the following required insurance coverage: professional liability, errors and omissions; commercial general liability insurance, including contractual liability insurance; business automobile liability (if applicable); worker's compensation coverage; and employee dishonesty insurance. Must submit copies of certificate of insurance with contract.

Submittal Content and Scoring

Proposals will be evaluated on Three Parts:

- Part I Required Format and Content in #1 below
- Part II Experience & Approach (100 points)
- Part III Budget Detail and Staffing Structure (50 points)

The top two scores in Part II will move onto consideration and analysis of budget detail and proposed service levels.

1. **All submittals must contain the following documents in this order to be considered:**

- Entire submittal cannot exceed thirty pages and be single-sided
- Title Page Including Entity, Contact Person (email, phone, address)
- Executive Summary (no longer than 2 page)
- Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Three References Attesting to Relevant Experience – hard copy letters preferred along with list and contact information

2. **Experience and Approach** (100) points)

Answer the following:

A. Business Services

- Describe specific experience with providing business services and any "lead" role the organization has had in regard to business services.
- Describe specific experience in working with the WIOA Core Program Partners and a business services integrated team.
- Describe the organization's approach to leading a business services team and how seamless services would be coordinated.

- d. Detail how the organization will go about collecting business intelligence from employers in the local area and how the organization will develop professional relationships with major contributors to the local economy.
 - e. Detail a strategy for providing information and education to employers on services available to them.
 - f. Describe how sector strategies and career pathways will be used to assist with business services.
 - g. Describe services that will be offered to employers and approach.
 - h. Describe how the organization will develop worksites and determine client placements.
- B. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services
- a. Describe specific experience with providing adult and dislocated worker services.
 - b. Describe the organization's approach to customer flow, initial screening, partner coordination, referrals and co-enrollments.
 - c. Describe how the organization will communicate with core program partners to coordinate co-enrollments and exits.
 - d. Detail a strategy for outreach and recruitment efforts related to Adults and Dislocated Workers.
 - e. Describe how the organization will ensure barriers are documented and considered.
 - f. Describe efforts the organization will make to support sector strategies and career pathways.
 - g. Describe services that will be offered and the organization's approach.
 - h. Describe life skills and work readiness services offered by the organization.
 - i. Describe case management and career counseling strategies and documentation of interactions with clients.
 - j. Describe strategies for meeting performance measures.
- C. Youth Services
- a. Describe in-school youth strategies versus out-of-school youth strategies.
 - b. Describe specific experience with providing youth services.
 - c. Describe the organization's approach to customer flow, initial screening, partner coordination, referrals and co-enrollments.
 - d. Describe how the organization will communicate with core program partners to coordinate co-enrollments and exits.
 - e. Detail a strategy for outreach and recruitment efforts related to Youth.
 - f. Describe how the organization will ensure barriers are documented and considered.
 - g. Describe efforts the organization will make to support sector strategies and career pathways.
 - h. Describe how the organization will ensure all fourteen youth elements are available to appropriate youth.
 - i. Describe how referrals will be managed for you who are not eligible or suitable for WIOA services.
 - j. Describe case management and career counseling strategies and documentation of interactions with youth.
 - k. Describe strategies for meeting performance measures.

D. One-Stop Operator

- a. Describe specific experience with serving as One-Stop Operator.
- b. Detail the role and responsibilities that will be undertaken as One-Stop Operator.
- c. Provide a detailed description of a proposed client flow to ensure Core Program Partners are included in upfront services.
- d. Detail the proposed management of the resource room.
- e. Detail information on how staff and partner training will be provided.
- f. Provide information on experience the organization has in regard to One-Stop Certification achievement and maintenance.
- g. Describe how system and Center orientations will be provided.

3. **Budget, Budget Narrative, and Service Levels (50 points)**

Based on the current budget information provided under the ***Project Budget*** section of this Request for Qualifications, provide a detailed anticipated budget. This budget and service information will be used to determine the Successful Offeror, however, it is recognized that actual budget negotiations will take place when funding levels are confirmed with funding sources. For the purposes of your submittal include in your anticipated budget:

- A. Staffing structure including positions, office location, and salary range.
- B. Corporate structure and support services that will be provided to Northwest Arkansas.
- C. Profit or program income proposed.
- D. Indirect cost detail.
- E. Number of proposed youth, adults/dislocated worker service numbers.
- F. Estimate the average caseload.
- G. Estimated direct client costs.
- H. Estimate cost per participant through exit and follow-up.
- I. Estimate administrative cost percentage.