

# **Oswego County Workforce New York**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
(RFP)**

**FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT TITLE 1-B  
YEAR-ROUND YOUTH SERVICES**

**Program Years 08 & 09  
(July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010)**

## **Part One: Background Information**

### **A. Purpose**

The Youth Council (YC) of the Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Oswego County (WDB) is soliciting proposals from qualified sources to provide year-round services to eligible youth in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Workforce Development Plan for the Oswego County Workforce area.

This request is being released to solicit proposals from those interested in working collaboratively to provide comprehensive educational, developmental and employment preparation services to eligible low-income youth ages sixteen (16) through twenty-one (21); both in and out of school. However, there is an emphasis to increase services to youth who are not attending high school. The WDB has designated the One-Stop Operator (Oswego County Department of Social Services, Employment and Training) as the agent for determining program eligibility, conducting assessments and providing case management services to eligible youth. Proposals are being solicited from community providers for services to improve education and skill competencies, to encourage and develop education and employment goals, to make the connection between school and work, and to provide effective links to the labor market.

It is the intent of the WDB to build a comprehensive workforce system that will help youth resolve problems they may encounter in attaining the education and/or skills needed to find and keep a job and advance in the workforce. The system will also link services to the local labor market needs, community youth programs, and services that have strong connections between academic and occupational learning and which provide for the holistic development of youth.

The mission of the Youth Council further describes and promotes this systemic approach:

*To promote an integrated system using sound youth development practices which enable Oswego County Youth to obtain the skills needed to succeed in the workplace and beyond. The system will be supported by a partnership, which includes all appropriate public and private providers of education, workforce and supportive services.*

The Youth Council and Workforce Development Board support the concept of developing and building upon the assets of youth rather than focusing on barriers.

The intent of this RFP is to enhance existing programs/activities rather than to duplicate them. A survey conducted by the Youth Council shows that services

exist which can be used by youth. This RFP is soliciting activities which can be funded on a per person basis to be used in the case management system for youth under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Numbers to be served will depend on the needs of Oswego County youth. Providers are to determine the cost of services on a per person cost basis and the Youth Council is the entity that reviews and accepts proposed costs. Procedures and criteria for evaluating potential contracts are outlined in Part Three, section C of this RFP. Key definitions can be found in Attachment A of this document.

## B. Target Population

Youth to be served in these programs must be between the ages of sixteen (16) and twenty-one (21) although priority will be given youth aged nineteen (19) through twenty-one (21); meet low income guidelines as defined in the Workforce Investment Act (total family income at or below 70% of the Federal Lower Living Standard Income Levels); and reside in Oswego County.

In addition, youth served must also have barriers to their ability to obtain employment. Barriers may include one or more of the following:

- Deficient in basic literacy skills, defined as reading, writing, or computing at or below the 8th grade level;
- A school dropout, defined as no longer attending any school and has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- Homeless or runaway or foster child;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- An offender, defined as having been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process or requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction; or,
- Requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

Eligible youth, ages 18-21, may also be enrolled as adults and receive services through the One Stop Centers such as Individual Training Accounts (ITA). At least 50% of all youth funds will be planned for out-of-school youth services. An out-of-school youth is defined as an eligible youth who is a school dropout or who has either graduated from high school or holds a GED but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed. Youth enrolled in alternative schools are considered to be in-school.

## C. Eligible Providers

The applicant can be a private, public, for profit or not for profit service provider. The applicant must demonstrate capability and effectiveness in establishing and maintaining multi-county partnerships, recruitment and integration of partners from business and education, ongoing creative program design and development and ability to administer services outlined in this RFP. Examples of eligible

providers are: School Districts, Rehabilitation Agencies, BOCES, Community Based Organizations, Proprietary Schools, and Post Secondary Institutions.

The updated OMB Circular A-133 calls for audits to be required of agencies that received \$500,000 in federal funding for fiscal years ending after December 31, 2003. Any agency or provider receiving funding through this RFP is subject to that rule and would need to forward a copy of their audit when requested to do so.

#### D. Program Elements

The Workforce Investment Act specifies ten elements that may be funded under the Act as part of a youth's individual employment plan. The intent for in-school youth is to provide long-term comprehensive services building on existing services available to youth who are currently attached to an educational (school) entity. The employment plan is designed to provide services to motivate youth to complete school while linking their education to the workforce and their goals upon completion of education. For out-of-school youth, the intent is to provide comprehensive, long-term services for young people who are not currently attached to an educational entity or school. The employment plan should be designed with a strong work first strategy that attaches the individual to the workforce quickly.

##### 1. Program Activities:

Proposals are being solicited that fall into any one or combination of the categories listed below. For example, proposals may be submitted for one activity or service such as an after school tutoring program or an independent living skills class. Proposals may also be submitted for programs that provide a full range of services to youth. These programs would include many of the youth program elements such as tutoring, independent living skills, and other services as well. Creativity in program services is encouraged.

Youth activities fall into the following ten elements:

- Tutoring, studying, training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies, such as
  - In-school and after school study programs
  - Peer tutoring
  - Year round remediation services including a pre and post-test with an instrument such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE),
- Alternative secondary school services
  - Alternative schools
  - GED programs
  - High School equivalency study
  - Home study for GED

- Summer Youth Employment Opportunities (The work experience component is operated by the Oswego County Department of Social Services/Employment and Training, an option available as designated by WIA.) However, the following activities may be solicited:
  - Job coach program for youths with disabilities
  - Education services
  - Public sector employment
  - Private sector employment
- Paid/Unpaid Work Experience
  - Public or private sector
  - Non-Profit Sector
  - Internships/job shadowing
- Occupational Skill Training
  - Youth under 18 are not allowed to use Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) that are allowed for WIA Adults
  - Career exploration/pre-vocational services or workshops
- Leadership development activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behavior such as:
  - Exposure to post secondary educational opportunities
  - Community service projects
  - Peer-centered tutoring or mentoring
  - Teen Institute or Youth Leadership Program
  - Decision-making training
  - Citizenship training which could include life skills training like budgeting, positive job attitude and other work-related behaviors, parenting skills,
  - School-based clubs which provide community service
- Adult mentoring (for a period of time not less than 12 months) such as
  - Sports programs
  - Explorer programs
  - Big Brother/Big Sister programs
  - Job shadowing/internships
  - Other programs which link youth with an adult with goals related to the workforce and the youth's goals
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling.
  - Referral to/linkage with community resources
  - Personal counseling
  - Academic counseling
  - Employment counseling
- Supportive Services that may include the following:
  - Referrals/linkages to community services
  - Transportation assistance, including Driver's Education
  - Child Care
  - Housing assistance
  - Referrals to medical services
  - Assistance with uniforms or other work-related attire

- Assistance with work-related tools which may include eyeglasses and other protective eye gear
- Follow-up services that must be available to youth for twelve months after program exit or completion such as:
  - Any services listed above may be considered follow-up services
  - Tracking a youth's progress
  - Regular contact with employers if the youth are working
  - Work-related peer support groups
  - Field trips related to career goals/development,
  - Career exploration and assistance with finding a better job

## 2. Basic Skills Activities

Program proposals are also being solicited for services to increase the skill level of participants determined to be basic skills deficient.

Basic Skills Deficient is defined as an individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes or speaks English at or below the eighth grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society.

The One Stop Operator will screen WIA eligible youth to identify who is Basic Skills Deficient. This will be accomplished by requesting the individual provide documentation to show current reading and math levels. If these are not available, the TABE survey will be administered. Individuals considered to be Basic Skills deficient may be referred to a provider. Proposals are being sought for providers to:

- Administer a pre-test to identify the current skill level
- Note: The assessment tools identified by the Workforce Development Board are the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE, Forms 5-6, 7-8) and WorkKeys (for the top three ABE levels: High Intermediate Basic Education, Low Adult Secondary Education, and High Adult Secondary Education)
- Develop a plan of service to raise the basic skill level of the individual
  - Provide and monitor these services
  - Achieve a skill level increase, which must occur within one year from the date of referral, for each youth served
  - Administer a post-test
  - Document that the skill level gain has been achieved

The provider of these services must follow these operational parameters:

- Pre-test must occur within 60 days of the date of participation. The 60-day time-frame will be determined by the One Stop Operator.
- Post-testing must occur at the following times:
  - At exit, if the youth is exited before completing one year in the program, or

- At one-year intervals following the registration date, should the youth remain in the program for more than one year.
- The same testing instrument must be used for the pre-test and post-test.
- Services must be provided to out of school youth throughout Oswego County. Service delivery must occur within Oswego County. This may include in-person at the One Stop Center or other sites, on-line distance learning, home visits, etc. It is preferred that the testing be available at the One Stop.
- Individuals with disabilities must be accommodated according to: 1) section 188 of WIA, 2) guidelines associated with the assessment tool used to determine functioning levels, and 3) state laws or policies.
- The service provider must show the participant demonstrates (through post-testing) that s/he has advanced one or more educational functioning levels beyond the level which s/he was initially placed at pre-test.  
Note: Educational gain – At post-test, participant completes or advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured on entry into the program.

## **Part Two: Program Operation**

### **A. Case Management and Eligibility**

The One-Stop Operator will assess eligible youth and develop an Individual Employment Plan that will contain educational and/or employment goals and the steps that will be followed to achieve them. This will include identification of need and referral to provider services approved through the RFP process that will meet each need.

One Stop Case managers will refer youth to provider services to assist youth in achieving their planned goals. The provider will be responsible for administering the service and achieving the desired outcome(s). The outcomes will be defined in the contract with each provider. The One Stop Case Manager will track activities and convene partner meetings as appropriate. All required reporting for Title I Youth will be the responsibility of the One Stop Operator. However, contracted agencies will be required to submit youth progress reports on a monthly basis to the One Stop Operator.

Oswego County uses the New York State Department of Labor's computerized case management system, OSOS. The One Stop Operator will oversee the reporting on this system.

### **B. Performance**

The Workforce Investment Act established three common performance measures for youth ages 16-21 and New York State has added a system improvement indicator for out of school youth. Youth common measure performance is calculated from data recorded in the OSOS and/or wage and taxation records. Data collection and reporting are done by the One Stop Operator. However, contracted agencies will be required to send the One Stop a report on every WIA participant in their individual programs on a monthly basis. This report should include the youth's progress and any achievement of performance measures.

Benchmarks tied to performance will be negotiated with each partner agency and program contractor. Benchmarks, contract costs and youth progress will be monitored regularly by the One Stop Operator. The Workforce Development Board retains the right to monitor all aspects of approved programs and the provider agrees to retain all records pertinent to this agreement, including financial, statistical, property, participant, and supporting documentation for a period of six (6) years. New York State's system improvement indicator is calculated from the registration information on OSOS.

Following are the performance standards that the WDB of Oswego County negotiated with the New York State Department of Labor.

## Oswego County Performance Standards

<b>WIA Common Measures</b>	<b>PY 2008 Proposed</b>	<b>PY 2009 Assuming 7% Increase</b>
Placement in Employment or Education	52.0%	56.0%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	40.0%	43.0%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	35.0%	38.0%
<b>NYS System Indicator</b>		
Increase Out-of-School Youth Participation	64 Youth	69 Youth

### How WIA Youth Common Measures are Calculated

<b>Placement in Employment or Education</b>	
Positive Outcome	Number in employment, military, post-secondary education and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the 1st qtr. after exit.
Participants Included in the Measure	Not in post-secondary education or employment (including military) at the date of participation (Participants in secondary school at exit are included in the measure)
<b>Attainment of a Degree or Certificate</b>	
Positive Outcome	Number who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the end of the 3rd qtr after exit.
Participants Included in the Measure	Enrolled in education (at the date of participation or at any point during the program)
<b>Literacy and Numeracy Gains</b>	
Positive Outcome	Number who increase one or more educational functioning levels.
Participants Included in the Measure	Out of School Youth determined to be basic skills deficient at pre-test, the number who have completed 1-year in the program PLUS the number who exit before completing 1-year in the program.

## **Part Three: Contractual Information**

### **A. Timeframes for Contracts**

- a. Proposals accepted through this RFP will be valid for the period July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010.
- b. The WDB Youth Council reserves the right to solicit proposals on a continuous basis if necessary.
- c. Contracts will be awarded for a one-year period with an option to renew for the second year. Contracts are renewed annually based on achievement outcomes as outlined in this RFP.
- d. Renewal of contracts is also contingent upon availability of sufficient Youth program funding under WIA.

### **B. Vouchering**

A contract based upon the proposal submitted will be developed with those providers selected by the Workforce Development Board. An authorization letter will be written for each participant enrolled in the program. Payment is made based upon the schedule in the authorization letter. In addition, appropriate progress reports and other participant documentation need to be submitted in accordance with the contract.

### **C. Selection Criteria**

Service Providers will be selected by the Workforce Development Board according to the following qualities determined by their proposals:

- Cost Effectiveness
- Timely Implementation
- Past Experience and Success

### **D. Review and Award Process**

The Youth Council will review and make recommendations to the full Workforce Development Board on each proposal submitted.

### **E. Limitations on the RFP**

This RFP does not commit the Workforce Development Board to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal.

The Workforce Development Board reserves the right to:

- Accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request
- Modify any portion or other terms of this RFP
- Negotiate with all qualified proposing organizations/individuals

- Cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP if it is in the best interest of the Workforce Development Board to do so
- Solicit additional proposals as necessary

Only Proposals accepted by the Youth Council and WDB will be used. If approved, services are done on an individual case basis. There is no guarantee of a referral for any program or service. Referrals are contingent upon continued sufficient levels of WIA funding.

#### F. Timeline

Week of 1/20/08	Request for Proposals are available
Week of 1/20/08	Public Notice to run in official county newspapers
January 30, 2008	Bidders Conference State University of New York Rich Hall, Room 118B Oswego, New York 13126 9:30AM to 10:30AM.
3/3/08	Completed proposals due
3/26/08	Compiled information to be sent to Youth Council members for review
4/9/08	Youth Council Meeting --Review/Selection of Proposals --Recommendation to full Board
6/25/08	Full Board Meeting --Approval of Proposals
Week of 6/30/08	Notification to Providers

## **Part Four: Proposal Submission**

### A. General Instructions

All proposals must be in accordance with the format specified below. Applicants should follow all instructions in this document and must include all completed forms and budget pages. The narrative should be printed in 12 point font on 8 ½” by 11” paper.

1. Submit one original proposal and four copies. No faxed copies will be accepted.
2. Proposals should be submitted to:
  - o Nick Della Penna
  - o Associate Director of the Workforce Development Board of Oswego County
  - o 103 Rich Hall
  - o State University of New York
  - o Oswego, New York 13126
3. Questions can be directed to Nick Della Penna at (315) 312-3492.
4. Submissions must accurate, adequate and clear. Proposals that are vague or reflect omissions will not be interpreted favorably.
5. Request for proposals must be received at the Workforce Development Board of Oswego County by 4:00 pm on March 3, 2008.
6. Proposals submitted will be for the period July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010.

### B. Proposal Outline

An individual proposal containing the following information must be submitted for each activity, using this outline as the format. Each proposal should be titled with the name of the project and its corresponding WIA youth program element.

1. Agency Information
  1. Organization Name
  2. Signatory Name, Title, Address (for contract)
  3. Organization Address
  4. Voice and Fax Telephone Numbers
  5. Contact Person, telephone number and e-mail address for this project
2. Applicable WIA youth program element (e.g., mentoring, leadership, etc.) as listed in Part 1, Section D. Describe Program participation requirements such as age, grade level, etc. Indicate that activities are targeted for in-school youth, out-of-school youth, or both.

3. Program Target Population Information. Provide details regarding experience with the groups named in Part 1, Section B including quantitative data on outcomes, placements, retention, and certification; and provide record of experience with assessment tools.
4. Program Description
  1. Describe the referral process.
  2. Location(s) where activity takes place.
  3. Activity duration.
  4. Time frame of services (specific start and end dates on open enrollment).
  5. Number of youth who can be served.
  6. Provide a brief description of the activity. Attach a curriculum if the activity is a workshop/training session.
5. Program Outcomes
  1. What are the main program goals or outcomes (e.g. remain in school; secure employment; budgeting, life skills, etc.)?
  2. How do these outcomes relate to the youth performance standards?
  3. How do these outcomes relate to youth asset development?
6. Budget Information
  1. Annual operating budget and primary source(s) of funding.
  2. Approximate number of participants participating in program annually.
  3. Cost per youth to enroll in program/activity? How many can be accepted at that cost?
7. Program Effectiveness
  1. Provide data on past program effectiveness which includes number of youth enrolled; number completing program; numbers attaining program goals.
  2. Provide data on agencies you currently collaborate with and an objective assessment of the results of this collaboration. Remark on goals and positive outcomes.
  3. The WDB has oversight linkages with schools and agencies based on their representation on the board, including: NYS Department of Labor, NYS VESID, Oswego City-County Youth Bureau, Cayuga County Community College, Oswego Industries, Inc., Oswego County Catholic Charities, Oswego County Opportunities, and Oswego County BOCES. Indicate how you will build upon these linkages.
8. Staffing. Provide staff resumes or job descriptions of those who will be working with this project.

## Attachment A

### Definitions of Key Terms

**Advanced Training/Occupational Skills Training** - An organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Such training should: (1) be outcome-oriented and focused on a long-term goal, as specified in the Individual Service Strategy, (2) coincide with exit, rather than short-term training that is part of services received while enrolled in ETA-funded youth programs, and (3) result in attainment of a certificate as defined below.

**Appropriation Level** - The amount of Federal funding authorized by Congress for a program.

**Basic Skills Deficient** - The individual computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

**Certificate** - A certificate is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers. Certificates awarded in recognition of the attainment of only generic pre-employment or work readiness skills are not included in this definition. A certificate is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of technical or occupational skills by:

- a state educational agency, or a state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a state
- an institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act (20 USC 1002) that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of that Act. This includes community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in Federal student financial aid programs
- a professional, industry, or employer organization (e.g., National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certification, National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc., Machining Level I credential) or a product manufacturer or developer (e.g., Microsoft Certified Database Administrator, Certified Novell Engineer, Sun Certified Java Programmer) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities
- a registered apprenticeship program.

- a public regulatory agency, upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., FAA aviation mechanic certification, state certified asbestos inspector).
- A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education and training to veterans and other eligible persons under provisions of the Montgomery GI Bill.
- Office of Job Corps.

**Educational Gain** - At post-test, participant completes or advances one or more educational functioning levels from the starting level measured on entry into the program (pre-test).

**Employed at the Date of Participation** - An individual employed at the date of participation is one who, during the seven consecutive days prior to the date of participation:

- did any work at all as a paid employee (except the individual is NOT considered employed if: a) he/she has received a notice of termination of employment or the employer has issued a WARN or other notice that the facility or enterprise will close, or b) he/she is currently on active military duty and has been provided with a firm date of separation from military service);
- did any work at all in his/her own business, profession, or farm;
- worked 15 hours or more as an unpaid worker in an enterprise operated by a member of the family; or
- was not working, but has a job or business from which he/she was temporarily absent because of illness, bad weather, vacation, labor-management dispute, or personal reasons, whether or not paid by the employer for time off, and whether or not seeking another job.

**Employed in Any Quarter After the Exit Quarter** - The individual is considered employed in a quarter after the exit quarter if wage records for that quarter show earnings greater than zero.

**Exit** - Exit occurs when a participant does not receive a service funded by the program or funded by a partner program for 90 consecutive calendar days. The term "service" does not include activities that are open to non-participants, services and activities specifically provided as follow-up services, or regular contact with the participant or employer to only obtain information regarding his/her employment status or educational progress or need for additional services.

**Exit Date** - The date of exit is the date on which the last service funded by the program or a partner program is received by the participant.

**Military Status at the Date of Participation** - An individual is considered to be in the military at the date of participation if: a) he/she currently is serving on active military duty and has NOT yet been provided with a firm date of separation from military service, or b) he/she is a member of the National Guard or one of the Military Reserves AND currently is serving in a mobilized (i.e., active military duty) status.

**Military Status in First Quarter After Exit Quarter** - The individual is considered in the military if U.S. Department of Defense wage records for the first quarter after exit show earnings greater than zero.

**Participant** - Individuals who are determined eligible and receive any service funded by the program in a physical location (e.g., a One-Stop career center) are participants. The criteria that are used to determine whether an individual is eligible to participate will be based on the guidelines for the program. (Note: Individuals who only receive a determination of eligibility, but do not receive an additional service, are not participants. Individuals who visit a physical location for reasons other than its intended purpose - e.g., use of restrooms or ask staff for directions - are not participants. States and grantees may choose, but are not required, to consider as participants those individuals who receive services that are available through the Internet and are not accessed through a physical location, e.g., a One-Stop career center.)

**Participation Date** - The date of participation is the date of the first service received after the individual is determined eligible.

**Post-Secondary Education** - A program at an accredited degree-granting institution that leads to an academic degree (e.g., A.A., A.S., B.A., B.S.). Programs offered by degree-granting institutions that do not lead to an academic degree (e.g., certificate programs) do not count as a placement in post-secondary education, but may count as a placement in "advanced training/occupational skills training."

**Post-test** - A test administered to a participant at regular intervals during the program. Pre-test and post-test must be the same test.

**Pre-test** - A test administered to a participant within 60 days of the date of participation. Pre-test and Post-test must be the same test.

## **Attachment B Proposed Common Measures**

Under WIA reauthorization there are three new youth measures recognized by New York State. These are referred to as “common measures”.

***Placement in Employment or Education*** - Of those who are not in post-secondary education, employment, or the military at the date of participation: Number of participants in employment, military, or enrolled in post-secondary education and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first quarter after exit *divided by* the number of participants who exit during the quarter

***Attainment of a Degree or Certificate*** - Of those who are enrolled in education at the date of participation or at any point during the program: Number of participants who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the end of the third quarter after the exit quarter *divided by* the number of participants who exit during the quarter

***Literacy and Numeracy Gains*** - Of those out-of-school youth who are basic skills deficient: Number of participants who increase one or more educational functioning levels divided by the number of participants who have completed a year in the program (i.e., one year from the date of program participation) plus the number of participants who exit before completing a year in the program.