Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA)
RFP Scope 1 – Subsidized Training & Employment Program
Wayne County Workforce Development Initiative (WCWDI)
Released on November 30, 2022
Table of Contents

Section I: General Information -----------------------------------------------Page 3
    Introduction
    Funding Source(s)

Section II: Program Feature & Design ---------------------------------------Page 4
    Program Design
    Required Program Activities
    Performance

Section III: Proposal Submission -------------------------------------------Page 8
    Scope of Work Proposal Questions
    Evaluation Criteria Specifications
Introduction
SEMCA has issued this Request for Proposal (RFP) to secure contractors for the delivery of Workforce Development Services under the Wayne County Workforce Development Initiative, funded by the Coronavirus State and Local Federal Relief Funds. Bidders may submit a proposal to provide Subsidized Training and Employment Services in Wayne County. This RFP will distribute the SLFRF funds for the STEP program.

Funding
The Economic Development Division is investing a total of $50 million dollars in four Workforce Development Programs. It is the intention that funds for the Subsidized Training and Employment Program will flow from Wayne County through the program administrator and service providers in order to serve eligible residents. Program participants will be paid a minimum of $15/hour wage during the duration of the training program.

Eligible expenses can include job training and subsidized employment costs to individuals that are currently unemployed or employed but are seeking to move to a job that provides better opportunities for economic advancement, such as higher wages or more opportunities for career advancement.

Examples of eligible costs include:

- In-house or on-the-job training, which would be based on the instructor’s wages
- Subcontracted services with eligible training providers
- Miscellaneous direct training costs (such as employee training-related travel to include ride-share or public transportation)
- Assessment and testing
- Subsidized wage payments
Subsidized Employment and Training Program (STEP)
The purpose of this program is to reduce barriers to employment, create career pathways, and drive industry growth to help individuals in Wayne County obtain and retain employment. More specifically, the Subsidized Training and Employment Program will provide funding for Wayne County residents to obtain a certificate or credential and connect participants to subsidized employment opportunities in key industry clusters and occupations. Wayne County will utilize training/education providers to help program participants obtain in-demand skills and credentials, connect program participants with employment opportunities in target clusters and key occupations, and strengthen collaboration across employers and training/education providers. The target industries for this program include:

- Mobility & Automotive
- Logistics
- Smart Manufacturing
- Research, Engineering & Design
- Digital Technology
- Corporate & Professional Services
- Financial Services
- Green Jobs

This program will operate for one and a half (1.5) years, or until program funds are exhausted. The goal of this program is that sixty percent (60%) of program participants becoming employed within one of the County’s target industry clusters within one year (1) after program enrollment.

Program Features
Program participants will follow the program administrator’s intake process in order to confirm eligibility. If eligible, the program service provider partners will provide case management and deliver program services to participants. STEP program staff are responsible for liaising with STEP program Employer Services staff and/or key industry cluster employers to inform eligible training and credentialing programs for program participants, offering eligible training courses that teach transferable skills and result in a credential or certificate (if applicable), and coordinating and supporting program participants through the duration of the program. In addition, they are responsible for coordinating funds paid to employers and training providers, as well as wages paid to program participants. Training programs will be in line with Wayne County’s identified target industry clusters and tied to employer need. Accredited programs may be built as necessary. Program participants will receive a minimum hourly rate of $15 for the duration of the program. Any full or part-time obligations must be disclosed to the program administrator and/or service provider partner.

Full-time or part-time enrollment will be dependent on program participants’ situation. We foresee five (5) main scenarios for the participants:

1. Enrolled full time in training necessary for employment or upskilling target sector. Participant will be eligible for a training stipend.
2. Enrolled full time in subsidized employment with an employer in target sector. Employer will be eligible for reimbursement.

3. Enrolled in part-time training, while maintaining part time employment with current employer (part time participant). Participant will be eligible for a training stipend, employer will be eligible for reimbursement if part of target industries.

4. Enrolled in part time training program while not working (part time participant). Participant will be eligible for a training stipend.

5. Enrolled in part time training program, while maintaining full time employment with current employer (part time participant). Participant will be eligible for a training stipend; employer will be eligible for reimbursement if part of target industries.

Employer subsidized initial-entry training payments will be paid upon paystub submission to the program service provider partner for employers in the target industries. Program service provider partners will reimburse half of the paystub payment for each program participant, up to 90 days. Training hours will be paid at $15 per hour directly to participant via stipend based on documented classroom hours and study hours required by the program.

STEP Employer Services staff will coordinate with employer partners to specify any gaps in their employment workforce and the required credentials/skills needed to fill open positions. For any program participant that is hired by a participating employer, the program will subsidize the new employee’s wages for the duration of the initial entry training, up to ninety (90) days. All employers must fall within the County’s identified industry clusters.

STEP Service Provision:

STEP service providers will serve as the link to the necessary training and employer partners, in the targeted industries. Key duties include:

- Screen program participant’s experience, competencies, skills, digital literacy to evaluate compatibility with occupations in target industries
- Help participants register for training/educational programs
- Help participants obtain in-demand skills and credentials
- Help participants explore career options in the target industries by understanding in-demand jobs, occupational requirements, career pathways and key industry credentials
- Help participants address barriers to employment
- Connect participants to employment opportunities in target industry clusters and key occupations
- Help individuals secure employment in identified target clusters
- Strengthen collaboration between employers and training providers
- Liaise with employers to place participants in training reimbursement employment opportunities
- Support outreach efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers in region
• Participate in outreach efforts to attract potential participants
• Use data, research and community engagement methods to inform work
• Support/participate in relevant Employer Led Collaborative activities
• Identify Wayne County employers from each identified target industry
• Work with Wayne County employers in targeted industries on customized, targeted solutions that leverage the power of collective problem solving to meet needs, and involve local training providers in solutions.
• Follow program and fiscal management and administration requirements

Eligibility Requirements
These requirements are aligned to the ARPA requirements for communities impacted by COVID-19. Program administrator eligibility requirements are listed under the program structure section of this document. Expectations for the program administrator and service providers are included in the Appendix of this Scope of Project. 75% of funds must be used to assist individuals impacted by COVID-19 who were living in Wayne County in 2020 and 2021.

Program Participant
Individuals who are 18 years of age or older, reside in Wayne County, and who meet the following criteria are eligible for the Subsidized Training & Employment Program:

- Individuals who are currently unemployed, underemployed, and those who are employed but seeking a job move that provides greater opportunity for economic advancement, and those who are upskilling within or seeking employment in one of the target industry clusters.

Program Design
Through this bid and the contracts that are executed from this process, SEMCA is implementing a unified approach and philosophy for better assisting job seekers in obtaining employment—described as the demand driven approach. All potential contractors for the STEP program will be expected to partner with the SEMCA Business Services Team (BST) and participate in Business Services activities as they relate to delivering the STEP program.

Outreach and Recruitment
Potential contractor(s) shall conduct outreach and recruitment efforts throughout the SEMCA region to inform communities and stakeholders of the benefits of the workforce system. Regular community outreach & engagement with community stakeholders is necessary to reach required performance targets and should be done in coordination with SEMCA (See General Requirements document for details). Outreach shall be coordinated in conjunction with other contractor(s) secured through this RFP as well as required partners.

Intake and Initial Eligibility
The intake and referral process, including initial eligibility determination, will be as simple and as accelerated as possible. Since any potential participant might first start out at a variety of entry points including at another agency or at an education/training provider, it is imperative to have strong local collaboration with key partners. The Intake and Initial Eligibility service function will consequently need to be communicated and coordinated in order to ensure a smooth identification and referral of clients to career coaching and other services. SEMCA Administrative staff will conduct the final eligibility determination for all participants, which includes criteria required by applicable laws and regulations.

**Career Coaching**
Career coaching services maybe provided to ensure that job seekers are efficiently provided with career assistance, including accessing education and training options; job-ready preparation for entry into new employment; and career exploration and career decision making activities. While facilitating customer choice, staff will also advise customers on how their proposed plans align with marketplace reality and state and federal program requirements.

**Assessment**
Assessment services are often required to properly align job seekers to employment and/or training. Assessments must provide participants with disabilities with reasonable accommodations, as appropriate. Where potential contractor(s) lack internal assessment resources, they will be expected to collaborate with or source additional assessment resources and services externally.

**Customer Tracking**
Contractors will be required to use Launchpad to record and track job seekers and employer activities and program services. Contractors may also be required to input information into other systems, pending further guidance from SEMCA.

**Performance**
The proposal must state how many participants you intend to serve, with the goal of sixty percent (60%) of program participants becoming employed within one of the County’s target industry clusters within one year (1) after program enrollment.

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**Section III – Proposal Submission**

**SCOPE OF WORK PROPOSAL QUESTIONS**
Responses below must not exceed one page for each of the following 5 sections.

1. **Agency Experience and Service Delivery**
   - Describe your agency’s experience providing workforce development services, and how you will be innovative in delivering the STEP program? If your agency/organization does not have previous experience, describe your experience with similar programming. Provide the number of customers served (job seekers and/or employers) and the outcomes achieved compared to the performance expectations of the funding source for the past three years of programming.
   - What experience do you have working directly with businesses or employers to meet their talent needs? Please specify industries and populations you target and timeframe of work
   - Describe current or past service delivery collaborations, including work with accredited training providers
   - Describe any experience administering a participant training stipends or employer reimbursement. What was the scope of that program and what were the outcomes? Please include number of years of experience in your response.
   - Provide information on the qualifications, tenure and relevant experience of the key staff proposed to operate this program, including any language capabilities

2. **Program Design**
   - Describe the strategies for conducting outreach and recruitment to potential eligible candidates. Highlight any local partner organizations that will be key in outreach and recruitment strategies and the methods the proposing organization will use to work with them.
   - Describe how the proposing organization will approach the target industries and emerging industries identified. How will staff encourage participants to move toward skills leading to demand occupations within these industries?
   - Describe the organization’s record management process to ensure that participant’s information is kept in a secure environment.
   - Describe how the proposing organization will work to place participants in Work Experience activities.
   - Describe how the proposing organization will ensure that participants have the necessary skills and aptitude to be successful in training and employment in the target industries. Describe how the proposing organization will integrate employer facing services, including employment placement strategies and work-based learning opportunities.
   - Describe innovative ways you will collaborate between agencies and/or programs to expand services to underserved populations, reduce overhead, and avoid duplication of effort and to identify gaps in services? Please include your anticipated cost per participant.
   - Describe your systems for entering participant data into data systems and maintaining oversight on completeness, accuracy and security of the data.

3. **Performance Outcomes & Continuous Improvement**
• Provide data on past performance providing similar services using State or Federal funds
• Describe how you will measure customer satisfaction for program participants and employers.
• Describe what specific actions and measures your organization uses when you need to improve outcomes or processes for program participants
• Describe your organization’s ability to adequately manage your proposed program to ensure attainment of all program goals.
• Describe your plan and capability to respond to all SEMCA reporting requirements on a timely basis. Specificity is desired.

4. Administrative/Management Capacity
• Provide background on your organization, including years in operation and key competencies. Describe how this program would be administered within your organizational structure.
• Explain plans for the hiring and selection of staff, supervision and management of staff, and program activities. Provide information on the qualifications and relevant experience of staff on this project.
• Provide a copy of your organization’s policies and practices related to Equal Opportunity and persons with disabilities.
• Please describe your experiences with programs governed by federal and state regulations, including how many years of experience. Highlight any experiences with ARPA or CARES Act funding

5. Financial Management
• Describe the grant accounting experience of key fiscal staff who will be assigned to this project.
• Describe key grant management and reporting processes used by your team to comply with mandatory reporting requirements.
• Submit the prior two (2) fiscal year financial and/or single audit reports. (If bidding for multiple programs, please only submit once)
• Submit a budget and budget narrative per the schedule in Appendix “A”. The budget narrative should identify the line items indicated in the overall budget and describe and justify the expenses included in the line-item budget.
• Risk Assessment Tool score and narrative

Separately, the bidder should also describe how funding will be integrated with other financial and non-financial resources to achieve maximum benefit to the customer. Identity all leveraged resources with specificity.

All administrative expenses (direct charged or indirect allocations) are capped at 10% of the total amount of the budget unless a Federally Approved Indirect Rate letter is submitted with the response.

Evaluation Criteria Specifications
- Number of Years in Operation: 1 to 4 points
- Language Capabilities: 1 Point for each language selected (excluding "English"), 1 additional point for "Other" (even if several additional languages are listed)
- Industry Clusters: 1 Point for each category selected (excluding "none")
- Target Populations Served: 2 Points for each populations selected (excluding "other")
- Federal Grant Funding Experience: 0 to 4 points
- ARPA & CARES Funding Familiarity: 0 to 4 points
- Grant Accounting Experience: 0 to 2 points
- Grant Accounting Experience: 0 to 2 points
- Career Services Experience: 0 to 2 points
- SEMCA Pre-Award Risk-Base Assessment Tool Score: 0 to 3 points
  - Outstanding Monitoring or Audit issues and/or Conflicts of Interest may lead to potential disqualification
- Experience and Expertise of Project Team: 0 to 5 points
- Past Performance of Organization: 0-5 points based on the relevance and impact of the organization’s experience in operating similar programs.
- Grant Management and Reporting: 0-5 points based on the organization's ability to comply with all mandatory reporting requirements
- Placement Services Experience: 0 to 5 points
- Program Approach: 0 to 5 points, based on approach to project and demonstrated ability to provide all required services.
- Marketing and Outreach: 0 to 5 points based on organization’s strategy to reach and enroll program participants
- Skills and Capacity: 0 to 5 points based on organization’s resources and skills that allow them to act as program partner.
- Cost Proposal: 0 to 5 points based on budget, including detail on specific expense categories and funding breakdown, including reasonableness of cost per participant to be served

SEMCA reserves the right to consider factors outside of this RFP that it deems relevant in making its final selection of contractor(s) that will serve the best interest of SEMCA's mission, its customers and the communities it serves. Contract(s) may be terminated immediately if funding is terminated.

Final awards are subject to approval by the Wayne County Commission.