Request for Proposal (RFP)

TechHire Boot Camp

Submit Responses to:

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.
Attn: TechHire Boot Camp RFP
14 Maine Street, STE 203A
Brunswick, Maine 04011

Responses Due:

October 21, 2016

Request For Proposal

I. Background:

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI), is a non-profit 501(c)(3) entity founded to administer and oversee the delivery of the workforce system's services for the Coastal Counties Region in Maine. CCWI is the entity working on behalf of the Region's Local Board to ensure its responsibilities under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) are met. Our workforce services are provided through the CareerCenter's and/or Workforce Solutions Center's (also known as WSC) delivery system.

CCWI was recently awarded a 4-year grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to implement TechHire Maine, a state-wide, public-private partnership designed to create a pipeline of IT talent. TechHire Maine is comprised of Maine's three Workforce Development Boards and Project>Login, an employer-led program of Educate Maine. Project>Login was launched in 2013 by seven of Maine's largest IT and computing employers and higher education partners. One key goal of Project>Login is to help grow the IT professional network in Maine to meet employer demand for a skilled workforce. The Project>Login program received a "TechHire Community" designation from the White House on behalf of the program's extensive network of Maine employers, educators, and workforce colleagues.

TechHire Maine partners will recruit, assess, train and place 500 individuals over 4 years in well-paying, middle- and high-skilled occupations in Maine's Information Technology sector. It is expected that nearly half of these individuals (240) will access the accelerated training model available through the Tech Hire Grant and further outlined below.

One key component of the TechHire Maine program is the development of an accelerated, i.e., 12-16 week intensive, training model that gives job seekers the skills they need for careers in the IT sector. This "Boot Camp" approach must be competency-based and aligned to the core skills needed for IT jobs with Maine employers. The training must include project-based learning and successful graduates should be able to demonstrate skills through a portfolio and/or project.

Population and Service Area:
TechHire Maine will train participants throughout the state of Maine over the 48 month grant period with the majority of the training occurring in 2017, 2018, & 2019. At least 75% of overall project participants will be youth and young adults with barriers to training and employment. These participants will be between the ages of 17 and 29 years old, while 25% of participants will be unemployed adults or incumbent workers who need to upgrade their skills to get jobs in the IT sector.

Due to the location of key employers, the rural nature of Maine, and the need for cost-effectiveness, the IT Boot Camp should be developed and offered as a blended model

of in-person coupled with on-line training in three major population hubs: Greater Portland, Lewiston-Auburn, and Bangor, Maine.

CCWI seeks bidders who are creative in approach while not jeopardizing instructional quality. For instance, a physical class may take place in Portland, but by using online or ITV resources, the other two population hubs, i.e., Lewiston-Auburn and Bangor, may also participate simultaneously. Alternatively, the instructor may change his/her physical location throughout the training delivery depending on student needs.

This particular request is to train at least 80 individuals during 2017 using the modality, i.e., boot camp approach, described above. Should the successful bidder meet or exceed the metrics and CCWI is satisfied with the overall performance, the contract may be extended beyond the first year. It is the overall intent of CCWI to have 240 participants trained under the TechHire grant effort using a Boot Camp model over the course of a 3-year period (2017-2020).

II. Scope of Work:

CCWI seeks the services of a training provider to develop and deliver an Information Technology Essentials Boot Camp which will give job seekers the key IT skills sought by Maine employers for 21st century jobs. Services should include:

1) Outreach: Assist in the development and deployment of an outreach plan for the Boot Camp programs. Work will entail marketing and advertising the program to targeted jobseekers across the state's three Local Workforce Boards.

2) Screening of Candidates: The training provider will be required to develop or identify a screening mechanism that will ensure selected trainees have sufficient aptitude to successfully complete the program. Other grant partners will be involved to assist in the administering of the screening tool.

3) Curriculum Development: Competency-based training must give students who are "tech savvy" but don't have a formal background in IT, the skills they need to succeed as help desk, data analyst, network or health informatics professionals, and related occupations. Curriculum should be responsive to the needs and feedback of Maine employer partners and adaptable as technology advances. Key tech skills identified by our employer partners include, but are not limited to: SQL, data and network management, Java, C# or similar 3rd generation programming language, object-oriented programming skills, algorithms and data structures. At a **minimum**, students who successfully complete this program should be prepared to sit for the CompTIA A+ exam. A component of the curriculum should also provide for "soft skills" training, including customer service and analytical thinking.

4) <u>Training Delivery</u>: Bidder must clearly outline an accelerated 12-16 week intensive training that will be delivered in the three aforementioned hubs across Maine. Training should provide live, instructor-led classroom time, project-based learning, and micro-credentials resulting in skills which can be demonstrated to prospective employers. Given the nature of the Maine population, this training should address the needs of young adults who DO NOT have a previous IT educational background, such as a degree in computer science.

III. Project Time Frame:

The TechHire grant funding for the Boot Camp may be available for three or four years. Initial (Year One) funding for purposes of this RFP is $200,000. Funding for the 2nd and 3rd year of this grant may be available contingent on performance/outcomes.

Year One Time Frame:
- October 11, 2016 - Questions about the RFP must be received by noon.
- October 21, 2016 - RFP Response due by noon.
- November 18, 2016 (on or about) - Decision on RFP will be made.
- January 8, 2017 - Deployment of training program to begin.

IV. Questions:

Immediately below are four questions to which bidders must respond, along with the maximum points which a response will be assigned. Be certain to include sufficient detail to demonstrate the bidder's understanding and compatibility for the work to be performed:

1) <u>Relevant Experience</u> (25 points): Describe at length your company's/agency's relevant experience working with career changers or non-traditional job seekers without a formal information technology background. Include discussion on:
   a. What has your agency's success rate been? For example, number of students who enrolled vs. number of students who completed training and number of students who complete training who were hired in IT-related jobs. Include performance metrics as attachments.
   b. Describe your agency's experience with assessing aptitude for success in IT or other training programs.
   c. Describe your agency's experience with developing industry-recognized certificate training.
   d. List recent projects where employers are involved. List employers.

2) <u>Service Approach</u> (25 points): Taking into account information provided in the *Background Section* above, thoroughly describe how your company/agency would structure its approach to the activities required in Section II. (Scope of

Work) and Section III. (Project Time Frame). Be specific and use timelines. Include discussion on:

    a. How will the bidder meet the target numbers (40 Portland, 20 Bangor and 20 Lewiston) with available funds?

    b. Include a detailed curriculum outline with learning objectives.

    c. How will this training prepare students for in-demand jobs in IT? Provide employer-related basis for information given.

    d. Key metrics, include the following:

Total hours of instruction: Estimated total hours of instruction per cohort. Can be a combination of instructor-led and online.	_____ total hours
Instructor-led hours: Estimated total INSTRUCTOR-LED hours per cohort.	_____ instructor led hours
Duration: Total duration of each cohort training.	_____ weeks
Training hours: Hours per week student needs to commit to training (include class and homework time)	_____ hours per week
Cost Per: Cost Per Trainee for each cohort including books/training materials.	$_____ per trainee

3) Budget (30 points): CCWI will provide an initial, one-year contract for funds up to $200,000 for these services (to train at least 80 individuals). Assuming a contractual agreement, please provide an all-inclusive estimated maximum fee, including itemization of all costs for which the requested work will be done. Your bid should include all of your staffing, materials, and business costs. A cost schedule must be included to justify the all-inclusive maximum fee. Importantly, your response should identify the number of individuals to be trained by your services.

4) Staff/Project Management (20 points): Describe how this training program would be staffed/managed. Identify the person or persons in your organization who would be the primary staff person(s) for the project. Please provide a detailed description of the staff person(s) background, including their relevant educational

and professional background, professional certifications, knowledge of and experience working with targeted populations and/or IT training. Also, describe your staff's ability to provide the training services we seek.

V. Information Requested From the Bidder:

Bidder's proposal shall be submitted in several parts, as set forth below. The bidder will confine its submission to those matters sufficient to define its proposal and to provide an adequate basis for CCWI's evaluation of the bidder's proposal. To facilitate proposal evaluation, the bidder is directed to organize its proposal based on the following outline:

A. Title Page:
State the name(s) of the organization, titles, address, telephone number, name of the contact person, email address and date submitted.

NOTE: State the name(s) of the person(s) who will be authorized to make representations for the bidder along with their titles.

B. Responses:
Provide complete responses and information to Section IV and attachment A. Please include headers identifying the requested proposal material by section within your response.

C. Format:
Proposals must be:
- Single spaced;
- Typed on 8 ½" x 11" single-sided paper;
- One inch (1") margins;
- Times New Roman font,
- Size twelve font;
- Sequentially numbered pages; and,
- Up to 10 pages for Section IV.

VI. Evaluation and Award:

The evaluation of proposals received under this solicitation will be based on scores received for each question posed in Section IV. Based on the above criteria, each proposal will be independently evaluated by two or more qualified individuals. Decisions shall be made on or about November 18, 2016.

Award of the contract resulting from this RFP will be based upon the most responsive bidder whose offer will be the most advantageous to CCWI in terms of cost, functionality, and other factors as specified elsewhere in this RFP.

CCWI reserves the right to:
- Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any potential bidder,
- Accept other than the lowest priced offer,
- Award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers, and
- Award more than one contract

A proposal may be deemed "non-responsive" if any of the required information is not provided, the submitted price is found to be excessive or inadequate as measured by criteria stated in the RFP, or the proposal is clearly not within the scope of the project described and required in the RFP. CCWI reserves the right to cancel this procurement at any time, for any reason.

Please read this document carefully. Your proposal must conform in all respects to the requirements contained herein. The requester is the Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc., represented by its Executive Director, Michael Bourret.

To qualify for consideration, three (3) copies of your proposal must be received at the address shown below by 12:00 noon on October 21, 2016. Faxed and emailed copies of the proposal are not acceptable. Late or incomplete proposals will be rejected as not meeting the requirement of this solicitation.

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Your proposal will become part of the official contract file. If you are selected as the contractor, any commitments made in the proposal will be part of the contract and will be binding on the contractor.

The issuance of this solicitation in no way commits CCWI to pay any cost for the preparation and submission of a proposal. Bidder assumes all costs of preparation of the proposal and any presentations necessary for the proposal process.

NOTE: A bidder's conference is not planned at this time. It is the responsibility of the bidder to inquire about any requirement of this RFP that is not understood. Questions may be addressed via email at the following address: info@coastalcounties.org. Any substantive question asked by a bidder which in turn results in information provided to the requesting bidder will be sent via email to all other bidders. Bidders must supply an email address for the purpose of receiving such information in a timely manner. The deadline for written emailed questions is 12:00 noon on October 11, 2016.