

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Youth PY 2022

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Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.

Antoinette Mancusi, Executive Director

Denise Griffin, Workforce Board Chair

Inquiries:

info@coastalcounties.org



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The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth program is fully funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration. The funds are awarded from USDOL, through the Maine Department of Labor, to Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc., the Local Workforce Development Board for Maine's six coastal counties. These are equal opportunity employers / programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

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Section I. OVERVIEW

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 on behalf of the Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) and its chief elected officials (CEOs). The CCWB region in Maine, comprised of six counties: York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Waldo, and Knox, has been designated as a Local Workforce Development Area under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA).

As staff to the CCWB, CCWI works to ensure that local workforce board's responsibilities under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act are met. Our workforce services are provided through the CareerCenter's and/or Workforce Solutions Center's (WSC) delivery system. Visit our website for more information: www.coastalcounties.org.

One of the main purposes of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is to assist individuals with barriers to employment, increasing their access to employment, education, training, and support so they may succeed in the labor market. Consistent with WIOA, this local workforce board's goal is to provide program services for eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth in an integrated service delivery environment, which means co-enrollment of the job seeker into relevant and eligible programs, along with a seamless approach to services offered. These services include education and training, career development, job training, adult basic education, and youth employment services.

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to select a service provider for the region's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth services for in-school (14 to 21-years-old) and out-of-school individuals (16 to 24-years-old). As the local workforce board's staff, CCWI will manage all questions concerning this RFP. The Coastal Counties WIOA Youth RFP Committee will review all submissions and make recommendations regarding selection to the CCWB who will ultimately make the final selection.

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THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

In July 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was enacted, replacing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Information and resources on WIOA can be found on the Department of Labor's website: doleta.gov/WIOA. Under Title I of WIOA, formula funds are provided to local workforce areas to deliver a comprehensive array of youth services to eligible youth.

These services focus on assisting out-of-school youth (OSY) and in-school youth (ISY) with one or more barriers to employment prepare for postsecondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional

opportunities. WIOA affirms the USDOL commitment to providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in postsecondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship. Funds are used to develop WIOA youth programs to improve the long-term job prospects of young people giving them basic educational, occupational, and citizenship skills.

Youth receive comprehensive services, and WIOA authorizes the education, skills, work experience, and support youth need to successfully transition to careers and productive adulthood. Local communities collaborate and establish partnerships bringing together local workforce training providers, schools, human services and housing organizations, community organizations, and other entities to create community assistance strategies. WIOA shifts the primary program focus of Title I formula programs to support the educational and career success of out-of-school youth. It creates opportunities for youth that move beyond traditional employment and training services and infuses such principles as preparation for postsecondary opportunities, linkages between academic and occupational learning, connections to the local job market, and needed follow-up services for youth served under the Act.

LOCAL PRIORITIES

The goal of this WIOA Youth Services RFP is to resource a qualified service provider to deliver WIOA-funded Youth Services for eligible out-of-school and in-school youth, ages 14-24. Services must be accessible to priority populations and geographical areas served by the Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB), and advance economic security and opportunities for youth who have barriers to employment and education.

Consistent with WIOA federal guidelines, the CCWB will prioritize the following performance measures to indicate program success for the WIOA Youth program:

- Employment or post-secondary enrollment at 6 and 12 months after program completion;
- Median wages at 6 months after program completion;
- Credential Rate; and
- Measurable Skills Gain

CCWB will prioritize programs and services that focus on connecting youth to education credentials and sustainable employment, that serve the most vulnerable populations in the local area, and that integrate high quality partnerships and collaborations into service delivery models.

Career Pathways: CCWB will give preference to programs structured in a way that move participating youth along a career pathways continuum, defined as high school diploma or HiSET attainment, matriculation into post-secondary education/training/apprenticeship programs with work experience opportunities, and placement into employment with demonstrated career paths. Program offerings must include the identification of an occupational or educational goal, and a structured sequence of activities that provide participants with opportunities to enter employment in industries with projected growth and

the potential for wage progression. Applicants must demonstrate how participants will advance from one level to the next in the career pathways continuum.

Serving vulnerable populations: CCWB advocates and prioritizes serving youth with barriers to employment, including disconnected youth. Accordingly, initiatives including outreach strategy, partnership approach, and service delivery that support specific eligibility categories such as homelessness, foster care, criminal justice-involved, or parenting youth are strongly encouraged.

Note: This area requires its service provider to spend 75% of youth funds on out-of-school youth. This is both a federal requirement under WIOA, as well as a local area requirement.

High quality partnerships: Program models that include high-quality partnerships and collaborations will be prioritized, to ensure the opportunity for workforce strategies, education, training, and trauma-informed case management services for participating youth. Additionally, the inclusion of youth voice and leadership as a guide in program design is strongly encouraged.

Provision of virtual services: Finally, CCWB's youth services must be accessible for hard-to-reach populations. Proposals should include strategies that incorporate best practices in serving youth remotely, and describe staff approaches and competencies in providing virtual workforce development services.

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) has developed a Local Workforce Plan for 2021 – 2025 that contains significant information about the Coastal Counties region, and the goals and objectives of the CCWB. Since the information is readily available to bidders, it will not be repeated in this RFP. The 2021-2025 Local Workforce Plan and Executive Summary may be accessed directly at: <http://www.coastalcounties.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CCWI-Local-Plan-2021-2025.pdf>.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

At the issuance of this RFP, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) has not been informed by the U.S. Department of Labor of the allocation of WIOA Title I Youth funds for Fiscal Year 2022. The total youth allocation for the current contract/subaward (PY 2021) is approximately \$508,471¹.

CCWI continues to strive for optimization of our allocated funding amounts by awarding all funding to one service provider who will provide the highest quality programs for participants and utilizing partnerships and referral networks.

Contracts/subawards resulting from this RFP are anticipated to commence July 1, 2022. Subsequent contracts/subawards will be issued based upon available funding and satisfactory performance. CCWI awards contracts/subawards on an annual basis with a start date of July 1st and an end date of June 30th.

¹ The average annual allocation for the WIOA Youth subaward in the Coastal Counties region over the last three years is \$483,703. The breakdown in allocations is reflected as follows: PY 2021: \$508,471; PY 2020: \$422,576, PY 2019: \$520,064.

CONTRACT/SUBAWARD TERMS

Selected proposers will enter a cost-reimbursement subaward contract. All contracts/subawards will be executed with CCWI as the WIOA grant recipient and fiscal agent. **Although CCWI makes every effort to reimburse invoiced contractor expenses on a monthly basis, selected proposers must be financially capable of covering costs if/when necessary.** All subawards and contracts written with service providers will include required Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provisions and compliance language including: EEO/AA, workplace safety, discrimination, participant grievance procedures, etc. (see **Appendix K- CCWI General Provisions and Contract/Subaward Terms**).

AWARD OF CONTRACT/SUBAWARD

Upon approval by the Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB), selected proposers will be invited to negotiate the contract/subaward. The subrecipient selected should plan to begin operations on July 1st, 2022. As deemed necessary, the CCWB reserves the right to negotiate terms of a contract on a different basis than that proposed by the selected bidder.

Section II: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This is an open and competitive procurement process. Eligible applicants must be incorporated, have been in business for at least three years, and include:

- non-profit and for-profit organizations
- private sector entities
- educational institutions
- community-based organizations
- other entities operating in accordance with federal, state, and local law

Eligible applicants must be in good standing with the federal/state government. Organizations currently barred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by a Federal, State, City, or County department/agency, quasi-governmental agency are ineligible to apply. All applicants must be registered, and in good standing, with the System for Award Management (SAM), unless the entity is exempt from this requirement under 2 CFR 25.110. See TEN 18-17 for additional guidance. All applicants are subject to a reference check as part of the application process.

All selected applicants will have demonstrated experience and expertise in the provision of high-quality workforce development services to the target populations described in this RFP. Additionally, selected applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Comply with all required OMB provisions and compliance language including: EEO/AA, workplace safety, discrimination, participant grievance procedures, etc. (see **Appendix K- CCWI General Provisions and Contract/Subaward Terms for the terms of award agreement**).
- Comply with the Maine Department of Labor's Youth Service Criteria Policy (https://www.maine.gov/swb/laws/policies/PY16-03_Youth_Service_Provider_Criteria.pdf)

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY²

All participants served with WIOA Youth funds under this procurement must meet **all** of the following eligibility characteristics:

Out-of-School Youth Eligibility	In-School Youth Eligibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Resident of the Coastal Counties region; B. Authorized to work in the United States; C. Selective Service registration for males 18 and older; D. Not attending any school (as defined under State law); E. Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment. Because age eligibility is based on age at enrollment, participants may continue to receive services beyond the age of 24 once they are enrolled in the program; and F. One or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A school dropout; 2) A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner; 3) An offender; 4) A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway; 5) In foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act 6) Pregnant or parenting; 7) An individual with a disability; 8) A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Resident of the Coastal Counties region; B. Authorized to work in the United States; C. Selective Service registration for males 18 and older; D. Attending school (as defined by State law); E. Not younger than age 14 or (unless an individual with a disability who is attending school under State law) older than age 21; and F. Low-income G. One or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Basic skills deficient; 2) An English language learner; 3) An offender; 4) A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway; 5) In foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act or in an out-of-home placement; 6) Pregnant or parenting; 7) An individual with a disability; or 8) An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

² WIOA maintains a 5 percent low-income eligibility exception where 5 percent of local area WIOA Youth participants who ordinarily would need to be low-income do not need to meet the low-income provision. The 5 percent low-income exception under WIOA is calculated based on the 5 percent of youth enrolled in a given program year who would ordinarily be required to meet the low-income criteria. For additional information see TEGL No. 8-15 and TEGL No. 21-16.

Note: Under WIOA, a youth who receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, is considered low-income. In addition, a youth living in a high poverty area is automatically considered to be a low-income individual. For additional information on low income see TEGL No. 8-15 and TEGL No. 21-16.

Section III: REQUIRED SERVICES

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board's (CCWB) approach to WIOA youth programming emphasizes a comprehensive approach allowing for substantial intervention in the lives of youth to attain meaningful goals of skill attainment, post-secondary education, advanced training, and/or job placement outcomes. It is anticipated that a successful program design will incorporate delivery of services from multiple sources to meet WIOA's required 14 service elements as well as achieve the desired education, skills training, and employment outcomes. In addition, the selected WIOA Youth service provider should play an active role in reaching out to and coordinating with youth-serving programs where youth who could benefit from WIOA services are being served.

The following requirements apply to all youth service providers funded under WIOA. CCWI seeks proposals articulating collaborations with other agencies to generate access to an appropriate range of services for participating youth. Proposals are expected to demonstrate capacity to fulfill all service requirements but may do so through partnerships.

Successful applicants will articulate a service strategy and program design that is consistent with the following program components:

1. **Out-of-School Youth**

CCWB continues to require that, at minimum, 75% of funds serve out-of-school youth; this is both a federal requirement for WIOA as well as a Local Area priority. For the definition of out-of-school youth, please refer to Section II.

2. **Work Experience**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth program prioritizes work experience for enrolled youth (20 CFR § 681.590). To ensure the federal 20% requirement is met, CCWB requires that the service provider strive to spend 30% of the WIOA Youth allocation on youth work experiences. This includes paid or unpaid work experiences, such as summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities. These work experience strategies must serve as a next step in career development, whether the desired outcome is employment, or enrollment in advanced training or post-secondary education. When determining the types of expenditures that are allowable to help meet this requirement, additional information can be found in TEGl 8-15 and TEGl 21-16. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to provide work experience programs, such as unpaid and paid work experiences, summer and year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training that serve as the next steps in career development, whether the desired outcome is employment or enrollment in advanced training or higher education.

3. **Required Sequence of Services**

Programs funded through this RFP are required to provide the following five required sequence of services to ensure that all participants receive comprehensive and individualized services consistent with the WIOA requirements.

- Outreach and Recruitment

- Intake and Eligibility Determination
- Assessment and Referral
- Case Management and Individual Service Strategy Development
- Access to a Range of Services
- Follow-Up Services

4. Outreach and Recruitment

Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal an understanding of the target population they have chosen. Applicants must be capable of executing a comprehensive recruitment strategy for the target population, especially for out-of-school youth to meet the requirement of serving 75% of this population. Applicants must show how the strategy they propose will lead to the desired level of enrollment.

5. Intake and Eligibility Determination

This process begins the first time a person comes through the front door of any organization and results in a determination of suitability of a match between the youth and the program. Program designs are required to include a detailed description of methods used for determining suitability. If the program does not match the participant needs of the individual, she/he should be referred to other, more appropriate services as defined by WIOA; this should be fully documented.

6. Assessment and Referral

For the purpose of identifying appropriate youth service elements and career pathways for each youth participant, the youth service provider must be able to conduct an objective assessment of each youth in line with Maine Department of Labor's Youth Service Provider Criteria Policy (https://www.maine.gov/swb/laws/policies/PY16-03_Youth_Service_Provider_Criteria.pdf).

7. Case Management/Individual Service Strategy

CCWI requires programs to use a common form to document Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for each participant. The document will identify the career pathway for each enrolled participant, as well as goals in basic skills attainment, employment attainment, or training/credential attainment, as well as appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate services for the participant. In addition, ISS should include any barriers to employment/education.

Updated on an ongoing basis, the ISS is intended to be an active document reflecting service needs and goals and evolving as participants' needs and goals evolve. The Individual Service Strategy should, at a minimum, contain a) participants' basic information; b) assessment of basic, work readiness, and occupational skills; c) supportive service needs d) short-term program goals and skill improvement goals; e) long-term education and/or career goals f) counselor, supervisor and/or case manager case notes; g) plans for follow-up services. Link to U.S. Department of Labor's recommended Individual Service Strategy template:

<https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/06/20/18/30/Youth-Individual-Service-Strategy-ISS>

8. Follow Up Services

A participant exits the WIOA system when s/he has successfully satisfied his/her program goals, or when a period of 90 days has elapsed during which the participant has failed to stay in contact with the program and there has been no federally reportable service entered into the database.

Follow-up must be made available to all participants upon program exit. Programs are encouraged to consider the needs of individual youth in determining the appropriate level and type of follow-up services.

9. Career pathways continuum structure

WIOA emphasizes the development of career pathways for youth. Applicants must describe in their proposal a clear emphasis on building a career pathways continuum for enrolled participants (and include a diagram as an attachment), indicating what services will be provided and by whom, including education, training, employment, and provision of trauma-informed case management services. A connection to a career pathway must be included as part of a youth's individual service strategy.

Career pathways must:

- identify specific steps of activities that lead to placement into jobs or post-secondary education/training
- provide clear advancement opportunities and transitions for participating youth
- demonstrate partnerships with educational institutions or employers to develop specific activities and strategies to connect education, training, and employment activities for participating youth
- connect youth to high-demand jobs

10. Employer partners

Applicants must demonstrate a plan for employer outreach and the capacity for strong employer partnerships in order to deploy the work-based training modalities required, e.g., work experiences. Program participants will benefit from a first-hand understanding of the requirements and expectations of employers in a given industry. Partnerships between employers and service providers should be built on the premise that the proposed program will benefit employers by developing the job readiness and industry-specific employment skills of potential employees, and by providing a more informed and motivated applicant pool.

Applicants must demonstrate partnership designs that offer employers the opportunity for direct interaction with individual participants and direct coordination with program staff. Partnership designs should detail which staff are responsible for employer outreach and engagement, and how staff will work with employers to support youth participants placed in work-based training modalities.

11. Partnership plan

A strong partnership is critical for this RFP to deliver the effective services that will have the greatest possible collective impact. Applicants must establish a plan that clearly identifies which organization is providing which service for program participants, including secondary and post-secondary education, occupational training, work-based training and apprenticeship, provision of trauma-informed case management programs, leadership development, and mentoring. Partnerships can include but are not limited to employers, higher education institutions, apprenticeship programs and other community-based organizations with expertise in serving the target population.

12. Mandatory Program Elements

<p>1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction</p>	<p>Development of educational achievement skills that leads to the completion of the requirements for a secondary or post-secondary school diploma/credential.</p>
<p>2. Alternative Secondary School</p>	<p>Alternative secondary school services or drop out recovery services.</p>
<p>3. Work Experience</p>	<p>Work experiences which include paid and unpaid work experiences, summer employment, year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, internships/Job-Shadow and On-the-job training opportunities.</p>
<p>4. Occupational Skills Training</p>	<p>An organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields.</p>
<p>5. Education offered concurrently with Workforce Preparation</p>	<p>Integrated education and training that occur concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation.</p>
<p>6. Leadership Development</p>	<p>Opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination and other positive social behaviors.</p>
<p>7. Supportive Services</p>	<p>Services that enable youth to participate in program activities such as assistance with book, fees, school supplies, transportation, and legal aid services.</p>
<p>8. Adult Mentoring (12 months min)</p>	<p>Participants receive adult mentoring for a period of not less than 12 months that connects to the youth's goals.</p>
<p>9. Follow-up Services (12 months)</p>	<p>Follow-up services are provided for 12 months unless the participant cannot be located or contacted.</p>
<p>10. Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling</p>	<p>Individualized counseling which includes drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs.</p>

11. Financial Literacy Education	Support the ability of participants to create budgets, learn how to manage spending, credit, and debt.
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training	Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business.
13. Labor Market Services	Participants receive access to career counseling, career exploration, career awareness, and the use of labor market tools.
14. Transition to Post-Secondary Education	Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to Post-Secondary Education and Training.

Funded programs must be able to provide, either in-house, through collaboration with other organizations (which may or may not be a WIOA-funded service provider), or through referral, access to the 14 elements of youth services required under WIOA. Access to a range of services should be based on information gathered from eligibility determination, the initial assessment, and after presentation of the full array of service options has been provided.

Section IV: WIOA PERFORMANCE

WIOA requires the Local Workforce Development Board and the State to negotiate and reach an agreement on local levels of performance for WIOA Title I programs. These performance goals/measures are known as “primary indicators of performance.” In negotiating the local levels of performance, the Local Workforce Development Board, the Chief Elected Officials, and the Governor must adjust for the expected economic conditions and expected characteristics of participants to be served in the local area. Table A below provides the six primary indicators of performance for Program Year 2021. Table B explains each indicator. Note: Performance measures for PY 2022 have not been negotiated as of the time of writing of this RFP.

Table A

Employment/Education/Training Rate (2nd Quarter after exit)	70.0%
Employment/Education/Training Rate (4th Quarter after exit)	69.0%
Median Earnings	\$3,900
Credential Attainment Rate	59.0%
Measurable Skills Gain	40.0%
Effectiveness Serving Employers	Baseline Year

Table B

Primary Indicators of Performance:		
1	Employment/Education/Training Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit:	The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For youth program participants this also includes the percentage in education or training activities during the second quarter after exit.
2	Employment/Education/Training Rate 4th Quarter After Exit:	The percentage of participants enrolled in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For youth program participants this also includes the percentage in education or training activities during the fourth quarter after exit.
3	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit:	The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

4	Credential Attainment:	The percentage of participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding on-the-job training and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma or its equivalent, during participation in the program or within one year after exit from the program.
5	Measurable Skill Gains (MSG):	The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains. Measurable skill gains are defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress towards a recognized credential or employment. It is expected that every participant enrolled in education or training will have an MSG goal established in Maine Job Link.
6	Effectiveness Serving Employers:	WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Departments to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers for Core WIOA Partners. MDOL has selected the following two approaches designed to gauge critical workforce needs of the business community: 1) Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers; 2) Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY

Service providers will be responsible for complying with all financial and programmatic reporting and monitoring requirements. Service providers will be responsible for keeping accounting systems compliant with OMB 2 CFR 200, monthly invoicing with supporting documentation, and annual on-site monitoring by CCWI staff and contractors. Additionally, federal and state monitoring may be conducted, from time to time, as warranted by federal/state funders. Service providers will be responsible for keeping and providing all necessary participant eligibility, enrollment, exiting, outcome, or other documentation required for tracking participants as required for data entry in the statewide Management Information System (MJL). Refer to Maine Department of Labor’s policies on MJL Documentation Requirements

(https://www.maine.gov/swb/laws/policies/PY15-21_MJL_documentation_requirements.pdf)

and Youth Requiring Additional Assistance

(https://www.maine.gov/swb/laws/policies/PY16-05_Youth_Requires_Additional_Assistance.pdf).

PROGRAM MONITORING

Service providers are subject to both MDOL & USDOL monitorings. Additionally, CCWI program management personnel will conduct periodic site visits and/or program monitoring to monitor the following:

- Compliance with regulations, policies, and contracts/awards;
- Operations in accordance with the proposal and the contract/award;
- Achievement of objectives in accordance with the proposal and the contract/award;
- Integrity of administrative and data systems;
- Quality of service evaluation through observation and informal interviews of participants; and
- Need for technical assistance or corrective action.

These monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities and operations. Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to perform administrative responsibilities including maintaining records of participant eligibility; attendance and progress; tracking participation; and submitting program reports and invoices in a timely manner.

Section V: NARRATIVE RESPONSE

Present your narrative response to each of these sections. Each subpart below should be addressed in the detail necessary to provide reviewers with sufficient information to score your proposal. The proposal narrative should not exceed 20 pages. Required attachments are not considered part of the proposal's 20 numbered narrative pages. Refer to Proposal Specifications in section VI for formatting guidelines for submission.

I. Program Management Experience (15 Points)

- a. Describe your organization's experience and success providing services under WIOA or other similar programs, including equal access for diverse and underserved populations.
- b. How many years total experience overseeing WIOA/WIA, workforce development, or related programs will your staff bring to this project? Please provide a breakdown of how many years of service by job title.
- c. Describe your organization's past experience in outreaching and serving either in-school or out-of-school youth, or both, ages 14-24, especially low-income and targeted populations described in this RFP.
- d. Describe prior experience leading workforce initiatives requiring the involvement of employers, multiple partners and leveraging resources.
- e. Demonstrate your knowledge, expertise, and experience in working within the communities and geographical areas identified in this RFP. If you are an out-of-state organization or newly established in the region, demonstrate knowledge, expertise, and experience working within a similar community and geographical area. Also, please explain, if selected, how you will quickly gain an understanding of the region.

II. Organizational Capacity (15 Points)

- A. Organizational Overview – please describe (1 page limit):
 - Mission, Vision, and Goals
 - Brief organization history
 - Description of any board or other governance structure that provides oversight for the organization
- B. Organizational Systems
 - Describe your organizations systems for managing information and finances. Summarize internal evaluation and control procedures to ensure compliance with financial, regulatory, reporting, and contractual requirements.
 - Please describe your systems for assessing necessary staffing qualifications and credentials as well as for hiring, evaluating, retaining, and training staff.
 - Please describe your planning and evaluation systems, which support your organization's strategic planning efforts, align your program activities with those efforts, and assess performance success.

C. Staffing Plan

Please attach a copy of the following with the proposal. Attachments are not counted as part of the proposal's 20 numbered narrative pages.

- An organizational chart of the proposed operational structure for the WIOA Youth program (1 page limit). Additionally, provide an organizational chart of the existing operational structure with the proposed WIOA Youth program (1 page limit).
- Complete the 'Staffing Plan' form (Appendix C).
- Job descriptions for all positions funded with WIOA Youth funds.

III. Framework Services (20 Points)

These common services form a core structure for a participant's involvement in the WIOA system. For each of the steps outlined, explain how your program design will fulfill the expectations of the WIOA system.

A) Outreach and Recruitment

- Describe the outreach and recruitment strategies to recruit eligible youth to participate in your program.
- Describe the demographics and characteristics of the targeted priority populations, including both out-of-school and in-school youth, and geographic areas to be served. Describe potential challenges that may arise in engaging and enrolling this population and how you will address these challenges using WIOA funds.
- Describe the organizations and audiences with which you will communicate to do outreach and recruitment, and the tools and methods you will use.

B) Intake and Eligibility Determination

- Describe the intake process, including the collection of basic information from potential clients, informing potential clients of available services in your organization or elsewhere, and determination of client suitability for program services. Describe the process of determining eligibility for WIOA funded services and which staff are responsible for this process.
- Describe the strategies you will implement to retain youth in your program once they have been made eligible.

C) Assessment

- Describe how your assessment process provides an objective assessment of each youth participant and includes a review of academic and occupational skills levels, as well as service needs and strengths, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants and informing the individual service strategies.
- Include a description of any tools, methods or partnerships used to determine the following: levels of basic skills, occupational skills, work readiness skills, prior work experience, employability, interests and aptitudes, and supportive service needs.

D) Case Management and Individual Service Strategy Development (ISS)

- Describe your program’s capacity to develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy based on the needs of each youth participant that is directly linked to one or more indicators of performance, that describes a career pathway that includes education and employment goals, that considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment and that prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participants.
- Describe how the Individual Service Strategy will be used to document services for each participant and to measure progress toward attaining goals. What steps will be taken to ensure that the ISS is an active document that reflects a client’s progress, evolving goals, and service needs?
- Describe the key steps and milestones youth and young adults will experience from outreach to program exit. Visuals, such as a flow chart, are encouraged to show the program design.

IV. Program Design (20 Points)

A. WIOA 14 Program Elements

- Complete the ‘Service Elements Chart’ (Appendix D), briefly describing how your organization will design and deliver each of the required 14 elements. Although not all elements are required for every youth, they must be made available to all WIOA youth.³ Be explicit in which elements your organization will provide and which elements will be coordinated with other organizations.

B. Partnerships

- Describe the responding organization’s partnership plan that supports the successful design and delivery of the 14 WIOA Service Elements.
- Describe specific partner roles and, if applicable, how the proposed partnerships will leverage additional funding to serve program participants.

C. Career Pathways

- Awareness: Describe how you will help youth and young adults become aware of the career pathways in sector(s)/industry(s) that are in demand.
- Training: Describe how you will connect youth to education that leads to post-secondary degrees and/or industry recognized certifications.
- How will you work to provide seamless transitions between training and employment opportunities in your career pathways structure?

D. Employer Engagement

- Describe your approach to partnering with employers, including strategies around employer outreach, work-based training development, and job placement.

³ The fourteen WIOA elements must be available to young people within three months of start-up (July 1, 2022).

- Describe which staff members identify employment opportunities for program participants.
- Describe past outcomes and how you have developed internships, job shadows, work experience, on-the-job training opportunities, placement in employment and other partnerships with employers.

E. Access and Locations

- Demonstrate how the proposed program will ensure access to services throughout the 6-county Coastal Counties region and address transportation and other barriers for program participants⁴.
- Describe the responding organization’s recommendation for service delivery locations (e.g., main offices, satellite offices or colocation options).
- Describe how the proposed program will utilize virtual services and how this will increase access for individuals. How will your program address barriers to virtual services for program participants?

V. Performance, Participant Planning, & Line-Item Budget (30 Points)

- Include relevant program performance/metrics for the last 3 program years. Attach reports generated from official Management Information System (MIS).
- Complete the Participant Planning Summary provided in Appendix E.
- Complete the Work Plan provided in Appendix F.
- Complete and attach the Line-Item Budget – Appendix G.
- Complete and attach the Budget Narrative – Appendix H.

VI. Financial Component (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)

This section requests financial information designed to assist in evaluating your financial capabilities. This section is graded on a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” basis. Respondents ***must*** obtain a satisfactory grade in this section, regardless of points awarded in other sections, to be selected. Included as appendices are specific forms you are required to complete and submit as part of your proposal. If your proposal is selected for funding, a more detailed, final budget will be negotiated with you. In this negotiation process, you may be required to adjust the budget according to the funding award you receive. All funding awards are contingent upon a detailed cost analysis that will be undertaken to determine the reasonableness of all costs before a contract/award is made.

Service providers must demonstrate the technical, managerial, and financial capacities needed to deliver WIOA services. Responses to this section should clearly delineate the organization’s financial stability and ability to manage WIOA funds. Required appendices are as follows:

⁴ The successful applicant will be responsible for ensuring access to the WIOA Youth program throughout the six-county Coastal Counties region.

1. Complete Financial System Assessment – Appendix I
2. Complete and attach the Reference Forms for 3 references (Respondents must submit completed reference forms with RFP submission. Additionally, references must also be submitted directly to CCWI by the agency completing the reference.) – Appendix J
3. Provide a copy of your organization’s most recent Single Audit (required by OMB Uniform Guidance). If exempt from this requirement, submit GAAP financial statements and management letter instead.
4. Certificate or proof of good standing with System of Award Management (SAM) unless entity is exempt from this requirement under 2 CFR 25.110. If exempt, provide an explanation and evidence supporting exemption.
5. Provide a copy of your most recent NICRA, if applicable.

Section VI: PROCUREMENT PROCESS

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Responses to this RFP must be received by CCWI by **12:00 PM on December 13, 2021**. All proposals must be submitted in PDF format via email to info@coastalcounties.org. All proposals must be submitted as a single PDF document. In addition, we do request that the Line-Item Budget also be submitted in Excel format (unprotected). It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure their proposal is complete, submitted on time **and** that you receive a confirmation receipt via email. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 2 hours (during business hours) of your submission, please email Valerie Odams, Executive Assistant, at info@coastalcounties.org. Proposals not received by 12:00pm on December 13, 2021, will be disqualified from the competitive process. Note: respondents submitting proposals via email assume full responsibility for successful transmittals. CCWI assumes no responsibility for failure in digital submissions. Late or incomplete proposals will be rejected as not meeting the requirement of this solicitation.

The submission of a proposal, even though best and final, does not commit CCWI to award a contract or pay any costs associated with preparation of a proposal. CCWI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in entirety this solicitation if it is in its best interest. CCWI may require the successful bidder to participate in negotiations and submit proposal revisions as needed.

LETTER OF INTENT

A letter of intent is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. Letters of intent allow Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) to plan for volume of proposals and resources needed. If your organization is submitting a letter of intent, it should be received by CCWI by **4:00 PM on November 15, 2021** via email to info@coastalcounties.org. Please complete the information using the form **Appendix A: Letter of Intent to Bid**. All respondents will receive email confirmation upon receipt. Should you subsequently decide not to submit, please inform us via the same email address.

SUBMISSION OF INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing to Valerie Odams, Executive Assistant, via email: info@coastalcounties.org. Phone calls will not be accepted. The deadline to submit questions is **November 15, 2021, by 4:00PM**.

Responses to questions received during the procurement process will be posted on the CCWI website at: <https://www.coastalcounties.org>. It is the bidders' responsibility to check the website for updates and postings. No questions will be accepted after November 15, 2021. No other CCWI staff, consultant or CCWI Board of Directors member should be contacted for assistance or advice during the entire solicitation period. Such communication will constitute grounds for eliminating a submitted proposal from further consideration. Responses to questions received during the procurement process will be posted by COB November 19, 2021.

CCWI is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants should ensure their proposals comply with the following requirements:

- The proposal narrative may not exceed 20 pages. The page limit does not include any required attachments.
- Proposals must be in 8½” X 11” page size, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins and submitted in PDF format.
- All proposals (narrative and attachments) must be submitted as a single PDF document.
- The requested Line-Item Budget must be submitted in MS Excel format in addition to including it in the single PDF document.
- Proposals must include sequentially numbered pages.
- A response to each section of the RFP is required and should follow the guidelines and sequences as specified in the Application section (Section V). Each section should be labeled.
- All attachments must be clearly labeled and in the appropriate sequence.
- Appendices are provided in MS Word or MS Excel format to allow respondents to enter information. Do not alter the formatting.
- Every section of the Request for Proposals should be completed in full. If funded, the proposal will provide the basis for negotiations, and final negotiated terms will be incorporated within the contract/award as the Statement of Work.

Note: Required attachments are not counted as part of the proposal’s 20 narrative pages. Required attachments are identified in Section VII: Proposal Checklist. Please note that certain attachments do have page limits. Additionally, the only acceptable attachments are those required by CCWI.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

Respondents that fail to meet the evaluation criteria specified in this RFP, or those proposals which do not meet the service needs as described in the RFP, will be considered non-responsive and will not receive further consideration for funding. Failure to meet the evaluation criteria can include but is not limited to non-responsive language in the submission, failure to clearly address all areas in the technical and budget narrative described in this RFP, omission of required attachments, and/or proposing programs which do not address the specific needs of the population(s) being targeted.

RIGHT TO APPEAL

Only an aggrieved person/organization may request a Stay of Award or an Appeal. An aggrieved person/organization is any person or organization who bids on a contract and who is adversely affected financially, professionally, or personally by that subaward/contract award decision.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) Appeal Period is initiated on the date the award notification letters are sent to the RFP respondents (which shall be no later than 2/1/2022). Letters will be sent both by email and United States Postal Services. All appeals must be received within 5 business days from the date of the award notification letter, no later than 4:00 PM EDT. All appeals must be submitted in writing, by both email and United States Postal Service sent to:

WIOA Youth Service Provider RFP Appeal Committee
c/o Charles E. Gilbert III, Esq., Appeal Board Chair
Gilbert Law Offices
82 Columbia Street, P.O. Box 2339
Bangor, ME 04402-2339
(207) 947-2223
ceg@yourlawpartner.com

The written appeal must state the following:

- How the award specifically violates the law;
- How the award represents an irregularity creating a fundamental unfairness; and/or,
- How the award is arbitrary or capricious.

The Appeal Board Chair will appoint an Appeal Committee made up of individuals for which this review would not constitute a conflict of interest. Every appeal request will be granted a hearing, which shall occur within sixty (60) days of the close of the Appeal period, unless:

- the petitioner does not represent an aggrieved organization;
- the request is received within 5 business days from the date of the award notification letter, no later than 4:00 PM EDT; or,
- the request is capricious, frivolous or without merit.

The Appeal Committee review will lead to one of two possible outcomes: to validate the award decision or to invalidate the award decision. The Appeal Committee cannot modify the award. If the award decision is invalidated, the RFP will be re-issued.

The clear and convincing standard requires that a majority of the Appeal Board be convinced that the truth of the assertions on appeal is highly probable, as opposed to more probable as not. The Appeal Board may only decide whether to validate or invalidate the award decision that is under appeal. In determining whether an award is arbitrary or capricious, the Appeal Board must not substitute its judgment for that of the RFP and Proposal Review Committee. There is a presumption that the award was not arbitrary or capricious.

All appeals are subject to the standards set forth in 5 M.R.S §§ 1825-(C), (D), (E) and (F), as well as all applicable regulations promulgated by the State of Maine, Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Division of Procurement Services, and all other applicable Federal statutes and regulation.

Section VII: PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Proposals should follow, in order, the outline below.

- 1. **Proposal Cover Sheet** – *Appendix B*
- 2. **Narrative Submission** – This section has a 20-page, single sided limit.
 - Program Management Experience
 - Framework Services
 - Program Design
 - Performance and Quality Assurance
 - Financial Component
- 3. **Staffing Plan Chart** – *Appendix C*
- 4. **Organizational Charts** (2-page limit)
- 5. **Job Descriptions**
- 6. **Service Elements Chart** (7-page limit) – *Appendix D*
- 7. **Participant Planning Summary** – *Appendix E*
- 8. **Prior Program Performance/Metrics**
- 9. **Work Plan** (4-page limit) – *Appendix F*
- 10. **Line-Item Budget** - *Appendix G*
- 11. **Budget Narrative** (5-page limit) – *Appendix H*
- 12. **Financial System Assessment** - *Appendix I*
- 13. **Copy of Internal Control Accounting Manual**
- 14. **Reference Form** (3 references) – *Appendix J*
- 15. **Indirect cost letter/statement from cognizant agency** (if applicable)

- 16. **Organization’s most recent Single Audit (required by OMB Uniform Guidance). If exempt from this requirement, submit generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) financial statements instead.**

- 17. **Certificate or proof of good standing with System of Award Management (SAM) unless you are exempt from this requirement under 2 CFR 25.110. If exempt, provide an explanation and evidence supporting exemption.**

- 18. **Organization’s most recent Form 990**

Section VIII: APPENDICIES

Appendices

- A. Letter of Intent to Bid
- B. Proposal Cover Sheet
- C. Staffing Plan
- D. Service Elements Chart
- E. Participant Planning Summary
- F. Work Plan
- G. Line-Item Budget
- H. Budget Narrative
- I. Financial System Assessment
- J. References
- K. CCWI General Provisions and Contract/Subaward Terms
- L. Resources and Links