

**Clark County Department of Job and Family Services
Job Readiness and Job Search Assistance Training Programs
Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Introduction

The purpose of the RFP is to solicit providers of a Job Readiness/Job Search Assistance Training Programs for Clark County participants in the Ohio Works First (OWF) Program, all of whom will be referred by the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services (hereinafter Department).

The goal of the training programs is to help each participant successfully implement the Employability Plan that is contained within his/her Self-Sufficiency Contract, a copy of which will be provided to the Contractor. (If the Contractor determines that the Employability Plan cannot be achieved, an amendment to the plan should be sought.)

Scope of Work

The Contractor shall implement a four-week training program that includes two-weeks of Job Readiness Training and two-weeks of job search assistance. The Contractor shall provide this training on the DJFS campus and will maintain an on-site presence at the WorkPlus Center. The Contractor will maintain two curricula – one for 20 hours per week and one for 30 hours per week. The program shall have built-in flexibility to accommodate individualized plans to address individual needs.

It is expected that the Contractor will conduct assessments at the end of the two-week Job Readiness Training module to determine if participants are job ready. Once a participant is determined to be job ready, the participant will be placed in the Job Search Assistance module. However, if the Contractor determines that a participant is not job ready it shall place the participant in continued employability skills training.

The program shall include the following components:

1. Employability skills

Employability skills are the foundational skills upon which occupational or technical skills rest. As such, employability skills are not job specific but cut across all job levels and industry types. Employability skills include both thinking skills and personal qualities that are essential to successful job performance and are teachable, basic skills necessary to getting, keeping, and doing well on a job.

The following components should be incorporated into the curriculum:

(a) *Personal qualities* – Although these are not “skills”, it is important for participants to learn and possess the following qualities to be successful in the workplace: responsibility,

self-confidence, integrity, adaptability, punctuality, positive work attitude, personal grooming, self motivated, and team work.

(b) *Higher-order skills*: learning, critical thinking, creative problem solving, decision making, appropriate social skills, and time management skills;

2. Basic Computer Skills

Hands-on practical computer training should be incorporated into the curriculum to ensure that all participants possess at least basic computer skills needed to increase their opportunities for employment. Instruction should include performing basic computer operations (using the keyboard and mouse, turning the computer on and off, opening software applications, opening, minimizing and closing windows, managing files and folders, etc.). Instruction should also include using email and using the internet for job search.

3. Job Search Assistance

The goal of this module is to assist participants in determining a realistic and appropriate career path, then equip participants with skills such as interviewing and resume writing that are necessary to obtain employment.

4. Job Placement

Upon successful completion of the training modules, the provider shall provide job placement assistance to participants. The provider shall use community contacts and knowledge of specific job openings to place job ready participants in paid employment. In addition, the provider shall collaborate with *WorkPlus* partners that can provide assistance with job placement for participants.

5. Job Retention and Follow-Up

Once employment is obtained, it is expected that follow-up will be provided for at least six months to encourage job retention. In addition, since many of the participants in this training program will have substantial barriers to employment, it is also expected that the Contractor will provide a case management component through which barriers are identified and addressed.

The training program should incorporate best practices as described in the report, *Hard Work on Soft Skills: Creating a “Culture of Work”*¹.

1. Recreate the physical environment of work to the fullest extent possible.

Simulation of the work environment may include the arrangement of physical space but can also include norms within that space, such as expecting students to speak and behave as if they were in a real workplace.

¹ Houghton, Ted and Tony Proscio. Hard Work on Soft Skills: Creating a “Culture of Work” in Workforce Development. May 2002. <http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/143_publication.pdf>

2. Establish the discipline of the workplace in all aspects of the program.
Constant attention to punctuality and dress, not just through lectures or discussions but through establishing the standards expected in the workplace, helps participants absorb and adapt to the norms of the workplace.
3. Give participants multiple opportunities to get to know successful people.
The rapport participants develop with program staff can be crucial to their success. Fostering relationships with people other than the program staff is equally important. Participants need to meet successful people of their own age and social background.
4. Create work-like tasks and establish teams to complete them.
The best way to learn about the world of work is to experience it. By creating work-like tasks and establishing teams to complete them, participants learn what is expected of employees and, ultimately, *why* it is expected. They can practice dealing with pressure, taking feedback, and negotiating with managers and colleagues. By working together in teams to get a job done, participants begin to understand the dynamics of a workplace.
5. Put trainees in the employer's role from time to time.
Experiencing the workplace through an employer's or manager's eyes can help participants understand the needs and constraints of their future employers. It helps them understand the world of work from a different perspective.
6. Provide support services so trainees can focus on learning.
In order to be successful at work, participants must learn to manage their responsibilities outside of work. Helping participants develop the networks of support they need in order to show up at work regularly and on time is fundamental to their success. Ranging from child-care to counseling to health care, links to support services must be established during the training program so they can continue after employment. Participants also learn to be proactive – to seek support services before problems become acute.
7. Incorporate Bridges Out of Poverty principles into the curriculum.
The Contractor shall incorporate the philosophies of the Bridges Out of Poverty model into the job readiness training curriculum, including teaching the hidden rules of the workplace and developing resources to break the cycle of poverty.

Upon the successful completion of the Job Readiness Training and Job Search Assistance modules, participants would be expected to achieve one of the following outcomes:

- Paid employment, either full- or part-time;
- Placement in a work experience program in the public, non-profit or private sector;
- Successful referral to another program.

Target Population

It is anticipated that approximately 200 participants will be referred to the Contractor during the course of the year. All of these individuals will have reported recent employment, although such employment may not have been full-time or long lasting. All participants will be in possession of basic academic skills. Most will have earned a high school diploma or a GED. Many participants will also present significant barriers to employment, barriers that must be addressed to ensure both job placement and job retention. Among the common barriers are substance abuse, mental health issues, and a history of domestic violence, for which appropriate referrals must be made.

Most of the participants referred to the Contractor receive cash assistance through the OWF program. However, a small number will be “absent parents” who have been ordered to “seek work” by the Court.

Historically, approximately fifty percent of participants drop out of Job Readiness Training within the first week. Due to this historical pattern, it is imperative that the Contractor plan for this major attrition of participants during the first week of the program.

Approximately 40% of those who enter job readiness training successfully complete both the employability skills and job search assistance modules. Most training completers who are not job ready are successfully referred to another program. Approximately 25% obtain employment upon completion of the job readiness training curriculum. Of those obtaining employment, 60% will maintain employment for at least three months.

Reporting Requirements

The Contractor will be required to submit reports to both the Contracting Office and the Employment & Benefits Division.

1. Reports to the Contracting Office:

The Contracting Office requires monthly program reports, included with the invoice, as well as monthly PRC Soft Service Reports, and quarterly reports. The monthly program reports shall include the names of all current participants, the number who showed for the training program and the number of successful completers, reported by the following categories:

- Employed, either full- or part-time;
- Placed in a work experience program in the public, non-profit or private sector;
- Successfully referred to another program.

The PRC Soft Services Reports shall include the amount expensed during the month and the total number served. The Quarterly Reports should show progress toward achieving the measurable outcomes, which will be included in the contract once awarded.

2. *Reports to the Employment & Benefits Division:*

The Contractor will be required to submit bi-weekly attendance reports including the names of the participants and the number of curriculum hours (in- and out-of-classroom assignments) recorded. In addition, the Contractor will be required to submit weekly “no-show” reports including a list of participants who did not report to the training, noting the name and social security number, as well as the DJFS caseworker to which the participant is assigned.

Contract Period

A contract will be negotiated for the period beginning July 1, 2007 and ending June 30, 2008. Two additional one-year extensions may be then negotiated without the release of another RFP.

Procurement Timetable

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
April 5	RFP released.
April 12	Prospective Proposer's Conference
May 4	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS
May 7	Proposal Review Begins.
May 21-25	Time reserved for possible meetings with final candidates.
May 29-31	Education & Training Committee meets to make final recommendation
June 13	Recommendations of the E&T Committee considered by WorkPlus Board
June 14	Letter of intent to award contract issued by the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services. Request for authorization of a contract submitted for approval to the Board of Clark County Commissioners. All applicants notified.
June 15-30	Final contract negotiated with the Department.
July 1	Service provision begins.

The Department reserves the right to revise this schedule after providing reasonable notice.

Prospective Proposers' Meeting

A meeting of prospective proposers has been scheduled for 11 – 11:45 a.m. on Thursday, April 12 at the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services, 1345 Lagonda Ave., Springfield, Ohio. The meeting will be held in the Snyder Room in Building B.

Role of the Clark County Department of Job and Family Services

1. The Department will perform and provide to the Contractor an initial assessment of each OFW referral, to include the following: family composition, employment history, aptitudes/skills, employment goal, child care needs and arrangements, transportation needs and arrangements, felonies or major traffic violations, highest grade completed, reading and math levels, medical history (when available).
2. The Department will negotiate a Self-Sufficiency Contract with each participant, a copy of which will be provided to the Contractor as a guide for providing training assistance to the participant. Included in the Self-Sufficiency Plan is (a) a description of the goals and steps to achieving self-sufficiency, (b) an inventory of barriers to self-sufficiency and steps to overcome those barriers, (c) required work assignments, (d) child care plan and (e) transportation plan.
3. The Department will designate a key staff person (Steve Ray) to serve as a liaison with the Contractor to ensure that communication flows openly.
4. The Department's case managers will meet on a case-by-case basis with the Contractor to addresses issues that might arise with program participants.
5. The Department will remove/sanction those participants who repeatedly fail to perform in accordance with minimum acceptable program standards.
6. The Department will perform both program and fiscal monitoring functions.

Program Proposal

Potential service providers should develop and submit a proposal that addresses each of the following:

1. *Identifying Information:* The name of the proposing organization, address, name of contact person, telephone number, and e-mail address should be clearly identified.
2. *Previous Experience:* The proposer's previous experience in providing similar or related services should be demonstrated.
3. *Services to be Provided:*
 - a. Describe your plan and capacity to provide employability skills training. Include a summary of the proposed curriculum.
 - b. Describe your plan and capacity to provide basic computer skills training, again including a summary of the proposed curriculum.

- c. Describe your plan and capacity to provide job search assistance to participants.
Include a summary of the proposed curriculum.
- d. Describe your plan and capacity to provide job placement assistance to participants.
- e. Describe your plan and capacity to provide job retention and follow-up services.
- f. Describe your expectation for success rates in the areas of training completion, job placement, and job retention. Be specific with respect to attainable percentage rates in each category, i.e. state the percentage of participants you expect will complete job readiness training, the percentage of training completers you expect will obtain employment, and the percentage of participants you expect will reach six-month job retention.

4. *Collaboration with other WorkPlus partners:* Describe on-going collaboration with current partners as well as new relationships that would be developed.
5. *Other pertinent information:* This section may include additional information not requested elsewhere.
6. *Budget:* A budget utilizing the format that appears as Appendix I must also be included. Contribution of other funds or in-kind support is encouraged and should be documented in the budget.
7. *Reporting:* Provide assurances with regard to the ability to meet all reporting requirements.
8. *Assurances and Certifications:* The proposer must provide assurances regarding the items contained in Appendix III.

Proposal Submission Requirements

One copy of the proposal should be submitted to:

Geoffrey Steele
Assistant Director
Clark County Department of Job & Family Services
1345 Lagonda Ave.
Springfield, OH 45503
Telephone: (937) 327-1717

In addition, an electronic copy of the proposal should be sent to Erin Thomas-Brodine at ebrodine@clarkdjfs.org. No attachments will be accepted in the proposal packet that cannot be emailed. The hard copy should duplicate the electronic copy in its entirety.

One hard copy should be submitted before 4:00 p.m., Friday, May 4, 2007. Faxed copies are not acceptable.

Proposal Evaluation

All proposals will be forwarded to a proposal review committee comprised of members of the Education and Training Committee of the WorkPlus Board and staff from the Department. Proposals will be rated utilizing the rating sheet which appears as Appendix II. Face to face meetings with some proposers may be requested. The recommendation of the proposal review committee will be forwarded for consideration by the WorkPlus Board and final approval by the Clark County Board of Commissioners.

Limitations

This RFP does not commit the Department to award a contract or to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal. The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to negotiate services and cost with applicants, and to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP.

The Department will review each proposal with respect to price, applicant's administrative and programmatic capabilities, and conformance to the RFP criteria. The Department may reject all responses if proposed rates are unreasonable or if the applicants do not meet the RFP acceptance criteria.

All proposals submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the Department.

Appendix I

Budget

Please submit a budget that includes all expected costs. Include other funding or in-kind support, if applicable. Suggested budget line items are, but not limited to, as follows:

Salaries (list each position and % of FTE separately)

Fringe Benefits

Consultants/Professional Fees/Purchased Services

Telephone

Printing/Publications/Postage

Staff Training/Travel/Mileage Reimbursement

Consumable Supplies and Equipment

Insurance

Memberships/Professional Fees

Administrative/Indirect Expense (Methodology for assigning administrative or indirect costs must be described.)

Appendix II Proposal Evaluation Sheet	
PROPOSING ORGANIZATION:	REVIEWER'S COMMENTS
EXPERIENCE: Contractor demonstrated prior experience in delivering the services requested.	
CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL: Contractor has created a realistic and comprehensive plan for providing each required program element. Plan and capacity to provide employability skills training. (Include comments on the proposed curriculum.) Plan and capacity to provide basic computer skills training, again including a summary of the proposed curriculum. Plan and capacity to provide job search assistance to participants. (Include comments on the proposed curriculum.) Plan and capacity to provide job placement assistance to participants. Plan and capacity to provide job retention and follow-up services. Expectations for success rates in the areas of 1) training completion, 2) job placement, and 3) job retention. Ability to meet all reporting requirements.	
COLLABORATION WITH WORKPLUS PARTNERS	
ASSURANCES	
BUDGET: Budget is realistic and maximizes use of limited resources.	
REVIEWER'S NAME:	DATE:

Appendix III Assurances

As part of the proposal, the potential contractor must provide assurances that:

1. It shall procure and maintain the insurance and bonds specified below:
 - a. Worker's Compensation Insurance as required by Ohio law and any other state in which work will be performed.
 - b. Commercial General Liability insurance for a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence with an annual aggregate of at least \$2,000,000, including coverage for subcontractors, if any are used.
 - c. Umbrella or Excess Liability insurance (over and above Commercial General Liability) with a limit of at least \$2,000,000.
 - d. Auto Liability Insurance covering all owned, non-owned and hired vehicles used in connection with the work of Clark County, or its departments, with limits of at least \$300,000 (Combined Single Limit) or, \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per accident for Bodily Injury and \$100,000 per accident for property damage.
 - e. Professional liability or errors and omissions insurance (if applicable) for a minimum of \$1,000,000 per incident.
 - f. The Board of Clark County Commissioners must be named as "Additional Insured" on the policies listed in paragraphs b, c, and d above.
2. The Contractor agrees that it will submit to the Department the latest completed financial audit of all funding sources used in the project as prepared by a Certified Public Accountant or auditor approved by the State as part of the Single Audit Act.
3. The Contractor agrees to complete and submit a Declaration Regarding Material Assistance questionnaire.