

Industry-Focused Sector Center RFP Bidder's Conference Questions and Answers

Question # 1: If bidding on more than one sector center, are respondents to complete separate Executive Summary and Program Narratives by center?

Response: Respondents should submit a complete proposal for each sector and must follow the requirements of each submission.

Question # 2: If bidding on more than one sector center, are respondents to complete separate budget forms and budget narratives by center?

Response: The above applies to budget as well. It would be a different set of proposed outcomes and thus a separate budget.

Question # 3: If bidding on more than one sector center, are respondents to complete separate Proposed Planned Outcomes forms by center?

Response: Respondents should submit a complete proposal for each sector including and must follow the requirements of the submission.

Question # 4: Regarding "Narrative responses must be formatted as follows: double spacing." Can the questions being responded to in the narrative be presented in single spacing?

Response: No. The double-spacing requirement applies to the narrative responses.

Question # 5: Regarding "Narrative responses must be formatted as follows: 12 point- font." Can the questions being responded to in the narrative be presented in a smaller font?

Response: No. A smaller font may not be used.

Question # 6: Is there any information about the four different industry focus areas: 1) Transportation and Logistics; 2) Hospitality and Tourism; 3) Healthcare; and/or 4) Information Technology? Specifically, what aspects of healthcare are being targeted?

Response: You can find information on The Partnership's work in these sectors on this webpage: <https://chicookworks.org/research/>. This page contains links to our Targeted Occupational Profiles (TOPS).

Question # 7: Section VII. A. of the RFP says that narrative responses must be double spaced. May tables, charts or illustrations embedded in the narrative be single spaced and/or use a smaller font?

Response: Yes, they may. For tables, charts, and illustrations embedded in the narrative, please use the required fonts (12pt Times New Roman), but you may adjust spacing as needed.

Question # 8: We are having a difficult time finding someone to audit our financials prior to May 29, 2020. Will it be ok to submit externally prepared financial statements? Are there any other recommendations?

Response: Provide the previous year's financial audit.

Question # 9: Hello, is City Colleges of Chicago able to participate in the RFP?

Response: Yes.

Question # 10: Can you spend some time explaining the difference between work-based learning approaches: customized training; on-the-job; and incumbent? We're having a hard time figuring out where to put our training programs in these categories?

Response: The RFP defines these four categories, which are established in WIOA policy.

Question # 11: What is BRED?

Response: BRED refers to Business Relations & Economic Development. Refer to the description of BRED in the RFP in Section II. B.

Question # 12: Can grant funds be used for training the same as we would use ITA or other WIOA funds?

Response: These are all grant funds. In general, yes, for the business customers and for network referrals.

Question # 13: So, we would not be able to ask any questions after next week?

Response: Questions may be submitted until May 13, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. CT.

Question # 14: What happens to the 20 points if you've never had this grant before?

Response: Referring to the "Past Performance and Planned outcome 20 points, we anticipate and encourage proposals from agencies that are not prior grantees. In this case, respondents should describe past performance for other grants of this type or equivalent grants, demonstrating your ability to perform on this kind of a contract.

Question # 15: Re: training - is there a percentage that we are expected to spend on work experience, or can we submit what we feel is an appropriate amount based on our previous work experience collaborations or what we intend to use it for?

Response: Respondents should define training and/or expenditures for training, if this is included in the program narrative. Please refer to the fiscal forms in your program narratives for business services, workforce coordination, and training.

Question # 16: Is there a certain amount we are expected to spend on WEX training, or can we use what we consider to be an appropriate amount or based on our previous WEX collaboration and what we intend to use it for?

Response: There is no training expenditure requirement delineated in the RFP.

Question # 17: You said the deadline for questions is March 13. After the 13th, you will not answer any questions?

Response: Questions may be submitted until May 13, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. CT.

Question # 18: As employers and businesses open to the public, we are now under a mandate from the Governor to provide face masks and sanitizing supplies to customers who visit our business as part of the phased reopening's. Are these expenses that we can budget for in our operational expenses?

Response: The Partnership will release a systemwide plan including safety measures that will be required of each site.

Question # 19: What considerations are being made for COVID?

Response: All services are currently being delivered virtually and follow CDC guidelines for workplace safety.

Question # 20: What does request for e signature mean?

Response: The Partnership uses DocuSign as an electronic mechanism for legal signature; should you wish to use it. At the least, your submission must be logged by the time and date stamp of your email. Procedures are in place if you cannot provide either an e-signature or a scanned and emailed document with original signatures. If necessary, we will follow-up with respondents to get sign off from persons with signing authority.

Question # 21: Will there be an automatic email response from the RFQ submittal email address to alert applicants that their message was received?

Response: Yes, there will be.

Question # 22: Do you know when RFP for manufacturing sector centers will be published?

Response: The industry sectors for this RFP are listed as hospitality and tourism, healthcare, technology; and, transportation, distribution, and logistics.

Question # 23: Is there specific information/detail about the four industries? some of the categories are rather broad, such as healthcare?

Response: Respondents should be experts in the chosen industry and able to provide narrative that informs their understanding of the industry sector needs in whatever way the system should support the sector.

Question # 24: Are there minimum and maximum amounts for the funding?

Response: We have internal determinations, but we have not shared any details - minimum or maximum.

Question # 25: Can apprentice programs be funded through this program?

Response: WIOA is a Department of Labor supported program and its business services tools and training are used to support registered apprenticeships.

Question # 26: Will there be a planning or start up period allowed for this grant?

Response: This grant is anticipated to start on July 1, 2020.

Question # 27: Will you be sending this recording and slides after this?

Response: No. However, we will make the recording and slides available on our website: <https://chicookworks.org/request-for-proposal-industry-focused-sector-centers/>

Question # 28: Will this July 1st start be delayed due to COVID-19?

Response: The anticipated start date is July 1, 2020. Some services will begin on this date, but we will use this as a prism when reviewing proposals. We do not anticipate any delays currently.

Question # 29: Is an applicant required to include all four work-based learning activities (OJT, customized training, IWT, and WEX/internships)?

Response: Respondents should detail their understanding of the industry sector priorities and how to maximize utilization of WIOA business services tools. All WIOA business services tools must be promoted to employers.

Question # 30: *Is the proposed sector center budget supposed to also include training dollars or will the sector center be able to access the various WIOA training through the Partnership (in addition to working with AJCs and Delegate agencies through shared placements)?*

Response: Please follow the budget instructions related to training and all delegate agencies of the Partnership services and review the section on Business Services. (Refer to slide 14.) Also reference this RFP in Section VIII. A.

Question # 31: *Our organization serves people with arrest and conviction records. Are we required to enroll all eligible participants, even if they don't have a record?*

Response: This RFP is focused on serving employer customers. All grantees of The Partnership serve the system; working with and serving people with and without records.

Question # 32: *I apologize my connection was lost, but was the question answered about City Colleges being able to participate in the RFP?*

Response: Yes, it was answered. The City Colleges of Chicago is eligible to respond.

Question # 33: *My question is related to formatting the proposal. It is mentioned that there should be a page break for each new section...are those sections 1, 2, and 3, of part C of the narrative? or should we page break the sections in part 2. program narrative for business services, workforce coordination, and industry experience? can we consider all the areas of part 2? program description to be one section and not worry about page breaking the sub-areas?*

Response: The page break requirement applies only to program narrative. See the Industry-Focused Sector Center RFP in Section VII. A.

Question # 34: *Do all participants have to be WIOA enrolled? WIOA eligible?*

Response: The Industry-Focused Sector Center RFP is focused on employer engagement. Grantees will work with The Partnership's delegate agencies that serve job seekers. This grant is WIOA funded and the primary customer is employers.

Question # 35: *Are the page maximums double spaced or single spaced?*

Response: Refer to the requirements in Section VII. A.

Question # 36: *Would interpreter training be considered appropriate if we focus on language used in the field, i.e. medical terminology?*

Response: Refer to this RFP in Section III. B for more details.

Question # 37: *is there a minimum number of people that a sector center is expected to serve?*

Response: An Industry-Focused Sector Center primarily serves employers.

Question # 38: Can we just choose customized training of business service for our RFP?

Response: Respondents should detail their understanding of the industry sector priorities and how to maximize utilization of WIOA business services tools. All WIOA business services tools must be promoted to employers.

Question # 39: Does customized training have to be in partnership with an employer?

Response: Yes.

Question # 40: If we attach additional attachments, we would like to provide; where in the submission should we place them?

Response: Respondents will need to determine where the attachment will apply and organize your response to that category and attach it with your program narrative. Check your system to be sure you can send large documents. Attachments should be committed to the portion of the RFP to which they apply.

Question # 41: Is this funding for organizations who already have sector specific and model program - or for those who are starting a new sector-based training program?

Response: The Industry-Focused Sector Center RFP is for those respondents that can provide the requested business services as described in the RFP.

Question # 42: Does hospitality and tourism include retail?

Response: Hospitality and Tourism is one of the four focus areas for this RFP. Respondents should articulate how they define the focus area(s) in their response.

Question # 43: How do you define expert in the industry?

Response: Refer to “expert” language from the RFP in Section VII. C.

Question # 44: Is it expected that a certain percentage of the sector center budget be used for direct training projects?

Response: Respondents should include any costs they want to be considered as part of their budget.

Question # 45: Follow up or would it be ok to just have leveraged funding for training?

Response: Nothing in the RFP prohibits leveraged funding.

Question # 46: I understand each type of experience is supposed to be promoted but do you expect each respondent to provide the 4 work-based experiences or can we choose one

Response: Grantees will promote all work-based experiences as defined in the RFP. The respondents understanding of the industry should inform the response related to training and/or work-based learning.

Question # 47: Just to confirm, the applicant should submit their own chart of accounts? The RFP budget instructions don't speak to that explicitly?

Response: A Chart of Accounts is not required. Please follow the RFP instructions.

Question # 48: Will you send this recording and slides after this call?

Response: No, but it will be posted to our website: <https://chicookworks.org/request-for-proposal-industry-focused-sector-centers/>

Question # 49: Can RFQ question submissions be submitted after the deadline?

Response: The deadline to submit RFP questions is May 13, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. CT.

Question # 50: Would it be ok to have leveraged funding training?

Response: Nothing in this RFP prohibits leveraged funding.

Question # 51: Approximately how much of our proposed budget be allocated for 1A and how much should be allocated for 1D?

Response: Your organization can make this determination.

Question # 52: What time period should be included in the Past Performances and Planned Outcomes grants list?

Response: Include the last program year.

Question # 53: Page 25 May additional attachments be included in the submitted proposal and if yes, will they be evaluated?

Response: Please include only documents requested as attachments.

Question # 54: Program Narrative questions Page 25 In order to abide by the RFP's narrative page limits, are the questions/prompts required to be included in our response and can they be truncated, or eliminated, as to not consume the narrative page count?

Response: If the numbering of sections is consistent, they may not have to included, although it is helpful. Truncated is permissible.

Question # 55: Page 23 Regarding double spacing, do the directions only apply to the narrative and not attachments, charts, graphs, questions and prompts, headings, headers, and footers?

Response: No, the directions also apply to the attachments and other parts, questions, prompts, headings, headers, and footers.

Question # 56: Budget Summary Forms Page 29 and 24 On page 29, the RFP indicates that Budget Summary Forms are required in both the Program and Fiscal Responses, but the Fiscal Response Attachment 2 on page 24 does not list them. Are we to follow the attachment listing on page 24?

Response: Please follow the instructions in the RFP on page 24.

Question # 57: Budget Narrative Form The Budget Narrative is requested in Attachment 1 – Program Attachment 2 – Fiscal (p.29 “Please include a copy of the proposed budget forms with the program response as well as with the fiscal responses.”), AND as Attachment 3. Are we to submit this form in all three places?

Response: Please follow the instructions in the RFP on page 24.

Question # 58: Fiscal Questionnaire Page 32 Is the Fiscal Questionnaire to be included in Attachment 2- Fiscal? It is not listed on page 24 but it is listed on page 32 and 37.

Response: Yes, the Fiscal Questionnaire must be included as part of the proposal submission.

Question # 59: Sector Center Checklist Is the Sector Center Checklist form to be returned in one of the Attachments, or is it to be returned separately? If included in the Attachments, which Attachment?

Response: Include the Sector Center Checklist form in Attachment 1.

Question # 60: Sector Center Checklist Page 37 Is the Financial Narrative Response the same as the Fiscal Narrative Response?

Response: Yes, the Financial Narrative Response is the same as the Fiscal Narrative.

Question # 61: When proposing the number of on-the-job training projects, should we be thinking in terms of proposed agreements or actual placements?

Response: Proposed agreements.

Question # 62: If an employee is laid off due to COVID, collects unemployment, and then is re-hired and provided new training and revised job duties, would that be considered a new hire?

Response: Yes; in the specific example provided it is considered a new hire. WIOA requires that all relevant documentation be made available to support the layoff and rehire.

Question # 63: Page 7 of the RFP states, “The Partnership provides services to thousands of individuals every year. The Partnership’s network of more than 50 community-based organizations, 10 American Job Centers, and sector-driven workforce centers serve 132 municipalities. An overview of the population served in the last program year is provided (see Attachment F),” but an Attachment F does not seem to be included. Could you kindly direct us to where we might locate that information?

Response: The information can be found here: <https://chicookworks.org/research/>

Question # 64: May we be provided with a list of current or previous year LWIA 7 sector centers?

Response: A list of currently funded Sector Centers is located at: <https://chicookworks.org/our-network/>

Question # 65: Is there a minimum number to be served under this solicitation?

Response: No minimum number is specified.