



CHICAGO COOK  
WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

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## **Career Pathways RFP Bidder's Conference Question and Answers**

*Question #1: The Partnership received several questions regarding a respondent's specific eligibility to apply for the RFP. Such questions included can a not for profit apply? can a church apply? etc.*

Answer: The Partnership cannot make a determination on a respondent's eligibility to apply for the RFP. Please see the Eligible Respondent Section on page 7 of the RFP on page 7 to determine your organization's eligibility.

*Question #2: I would like to view the Webinar and PowerPoint. Where can I find them?*

Answer: a copy of the Bidders Conference Webinar and PowerPoint can be accessed using this link.

<https://chicookworks.org/request-for-proposals-for-career-pathway-training-program/>

*Question #3: Can the training be done on-line?*

Answer: Yes, training may be delivered in a virtual on-line format. However, all aspects of scope of services must be provided.

*Question #4: Can credentials be earned during the training?*

Answer: Yes, credentials may be earned during the training period.

*Question #5: What is the maximum to apply for?*

Answer: The Partnership did not identify a maximum amount.

*Question #6: Does a program need to be on the approved ITA list to apply for this funding opportunity?*

Answer: No, but the proposed training program/curriculum must be approved by an accrediting body.

*Question #7: I have a professional educator's license from the State of Illinois, does that count as an acceptable credentialing agent for this program?*

Answer: No. The proposed training program or curriculum must be approved by an accrediting body.

*Question #8: What is the recommended case load?*

Answer: The Partnership did not identify a recommended case load.

*Question #9: Could you specify what kinds of training would fall into "business and professional services"?*

Answer: Occupations such as Administrative and Officer Workers, Legal Secretaries and Paralegals, Accountants and Financial Clerks, Accountants and Financial Clerks, Human Resource Specialist and Security Guards fall into this category.

*Question #10: If not budgeting Direct Training, and this is a new program, how is that reimbued? Is it intended to be through a separate method?*

Answer: This is a cost reimbursement contract. Selected respondents will submit monthly vouchers based on actual costs and will be reimbursed accordingly.

*Question #11: If a training provider has an approved cost of \$8,000 per ITA and you are proposing to service 50 Individuals, then that does not leave much to service customers with WIOA services. Should the ITA provider expect less than the maximum ITA maximum for this project?*

Answer: The respondent must submit a budget for their proposed program that includes the costs of training and all the services outlined in the RFP. Organizations will be reimbursed for the costs incurred based on a negotiated budget.

*Question #12: Will training providers need to use special software/platform for onboarding candidates?*

Answer: Yes, all participant enrollment, service activity and tracking will be recorded in our Career Connect system.

*Question #13: Will assistance be provided to get a program certified?*

Answer: No. The respondent's training program must be approved by an accrediting body prior to applying for the RFP.

*Question #14: What does median earnings refer to? monthly/yearly? Maximum or minimum?*

Answer: Median earnings is a required WIOA performance measure. It is calculated by tracking all participant earnings 2 quarters after exit. The median earnings rate refers to the "middle" total second quarterly earnings.

*Question #15: How often will Career Pathway RFP's be issued? Yearly?*

Answer: The Partnership typically releases a WIOA RFP every 4 years. However, RFPs may be released based on available funding and priorities of The Partnership and our Local Workforce Investment Board.

*Question #16: If we serve individuals 18-24, is that appropriate for this RRFP?*

Answer: Yes. Funding for the program is through our WIOA Adult and or Dislocated Worker grants. The minimum age for both groups is 18 years. Please refer to the WIOA participant eligibility guidelines on page 10 of the RFP.

*Question #17: If a training provider is reapplying to become a delegate agency, should we assume career pathway enrollments would count toward our IA and ID grants, or are the enrollments separate?*

Answer: If a respondent is awarded both a delegate agency and Career Pathway Training Program grant, there will be distinct and separate outcomes, scopes of services and funding for each program.

*Question #18: Is there going to be a minimum percentage of supportive services. (e.g., 2.5% of total budget for Dislocated etc.)?*

Answer: No, the respondent should propose a supportive services amount that is appropriate for their proposed program.

*Question #19: Will WIOA fund paid internships? Should organizations include funding for paid internship in their budgets or is the industry/company where the internship will be held responsible for paying internships.*

Answer: WIOA can pay for paid internships. Respondents should describe internship opportunities and plans in the proposal but should NOT include funding for paid internships in their budget. Companies or businesses that offer paid internships with their own funds are always encouraged but not required.

*Question #20: Is there a maximum length limit of a training program?*

Answer: No. The Partnership did not identify a maximum length.

*Question #21: For adults previously self-employed, will business or entrepreneurial training in one of the Demand occupations be acceptable? And can the outcome of a "New Business" be considered?*

Answer: The proposed entrepreneurial training must be within one of the high demand industry sectors listed in the RFP and the curriculum must be approved by an accrediting body. Self-employment can be considered an acceptable outcome.

*Question #22: The 30-page narrative is single-spaced, correct?*

Answer: No, it should be double spaced.

*Question #23: Are industry credentials which are earned within one year of the program counted?*

Answer: Industry recognized credentials may be earned up to one year after completion of the training.

*Question #24: Is there any information on winners of the RFP from the previous years?*

Answer: The following is a list of organization currently funded with the training industry and funding award.

Organization Name	Industry	Adult Funding	Dislocated Worker Funding
Jane Addams Resource Center	Manufacturing	\$217 500	\$217,500
Symbol Training Institute	Manufacturing	\$225,000	\$210,000
Instituto Del Progreso Latino	Manufacturing	\$206,679	0
Greater West Town Community Development	Shipping and Receiving	\$206,357	\$102,534

*Question #25: Is there a desirable/acceptable cost per placement?'*

Answer: No. Respondents will need to explain the reasonableness of their costs.

*Question #26: Can you serve only Persons with Disabilities and Veterans through this grant?*

Answer: Yes.

*Question #27: Can you provide more clarity on the career pathway map. Do you have a template for the career path map that you want us to use?*

Answer: The Partnership expects respondents to develop a career pathway map or career ladder for their proposed training program. Respondents may use whatever format you believe conveys the information best.

*Questions # 28: Are Bronzeville and Hyde Park in the qualified area of the city?*

Answer: The Career Pathway RFP is not restricted to any specific city neighborhoods and may include suburban areas as well.

*Question # 29: Can schools or ITA providers submit a proposal?*

Answer: Training Schools can submit proposals if they meet the RFP requirements.

*Question #30: Will a nationally recognized industry certification be accepted as a credential?*

Answer: Yes, it will.

*Question #31: How many organizations do you target to extend an offer?*

Answer: The Partnership is not targeting a specific number of programs for funding. Awards will be made based on the number of quality responses and available funds.

*Question # 32: Are organizations able to collaborate with one provider offering technical training and the other remedial services?*

Answer: Yes. Respondents may partner and/or subcontract with entities they deem appropriate.

*Question #33: If an individual is credentialed through the State of Illinois, is that considered acceptable?*

Answer: No. The training program must be approved by an accrediting body not those providing the training.

*Question #34: Based on the Fiscal portion of the presentation, the Technical Training budget is separate from the service provider budget. Is this correct?*

Answer: The budget should include the costs of the entire proposal covering personnel, operating and supportive services. If applying for both Adult and Dislocated Worker funding, the budget should be separated into both those funding streams.

*Question #35: You mention, "Training programs must be approved by an accrediting body. "Are you looking specifically accreditation by ICCB/IBHE, or do you consider other accrediting bodies beyond that? (Example, we are accredited by the National Center for Construction Education & Research.*

Answer: Any appropriate accrediting body.

*Question #36: Can you train IT Software Testers?*

Answer: Respondents can submit proposals for training in the identified industries.

*Question #37: What if we are not accredited but our partner is?*

Answer: The training portion of the program will need to be accredited.

*Question #38: Will this RFP be offered next summer?*

Answer: The Partnership does not anticipate releasing an RFP again next summer. The contracts awarded may be renewed up to four years.

*Question #39: Since no direct training funds can be requested, how will training costs be paid?*

Answer: This is a cost reimbursement contract. Selected respondents will have an approved budget that details total program costs. Respondents will submit monthly vouchers detailing actual costs spent on the program. The Partnership will reimburse organizations on actual costs incurred.

*Question #40: If we bid and are not able to meet the number of students we need to train in a year, do we return the money or roll it over into the next year?*

Answer: The organization will be reimbursed based on expenditures. Unspent monies come back to The Partnership.

*Question #41: When you say eligible within the City of Chicago, Cook County or Illinois are you saying having a separate license with the entities or just a business license?*

Answer: It means the opposite of being ineligible, Not barred from doing business with these entities.

*Question #42: Is there a minimum amount of funding we are expected to apply for?*

Answer: No. The Partnership did not identify a minimum funding amount.

*Question #43: Does the curriculum need to be approved an accrediting body BEFORE we apply, or can that be done after the grant is awarded?*

Answer: The curriculum MUST be approved before the proposal is submitted.

*Question #44: The earnings are for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, not annual, correct?*

Answer: Yes, that is correct.

*Question #45: Can you focus on more than one target entity (we have two training programs, one for TDL and one for Manufacturing)?*

Answer: Yes, but you must submit two separate proposals.

*Question #46: Are High School Diplomas or GEDs the only credentials considered?*

Answer: No. The Partnership expects participants to earn industry recognizable credentials as an outcome of the proposed training program.

*Question #47: Can existing WIOA participants enroll in this Career Pathways Program? Also, if an existing WIOA Career Services Provider is awarded this grant, and receives referrals from another WIOA Career Services Provider, which agency delivers the Career Services?*

*Answer: Yes, we will work with both entitles, but Career Services should be provided by your organization.*

*Question #48: What does ITA stand for?*

*Answer: The acronym ITA stands for Individual Training Account.*

*Question #49: Can the Certificate of Good Standing be a screen print from the Secretary of State's Office.*

*Answer: Yes. The screen print/shot is acceptable.*

*Question #50: Are Waukegan and Glennwood included in the training area?*

*Answer: Programs funded under this RFP are to serve Cook County residents.*

*Question #51: Do you offer any proposal assistance services, specifically with the budget?*

*Answer: No, we have a Bidders Conference where questions can be asked, and we also give respondents an opportunity to ask questions via email though by the due date.*

*Question #52: Are remedial services required as a part of this program?*

*Answer: No. Remedial services are not required.*

*Question #53: Some churches have no obligation to file with the IRS by law. Can they qualify?*

*Answer: Yes. They can also provide Good Standing Certificate as proof of status.*

*Question #54: What is the turnaround time? Are there any delays expected?*

*Answer: The tentative schedule is listed in the RFP. The Partnership expects contracts to start October 1, 2021.*

*Question #55: Is an active SAM number needed from the state?*

*Answer: No. A SAM number is not needed.*

*Question #56: Our company is registered in Crystal Lake, McHenry County, but we are an MBE certified by Cook County and the State of Illinois. Can we participate?*

*Answer: We did not specify location, but this RFP to serve residents of Cook County. It should be convenient for participants to be able to access services*

*Question #57: Do you know what entity would certify a culinary program?*

*Answer: They are generally certified by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.*

*Question #58: The training should not change tuition to the student, correct? Job seekers should not have to pay any fees for participation, correct?*

Answer: That is correct.

*Question #59: We are an approved Training Provider. Can you explain the purpose and who should complete the RFP? To reconfirm, is the purpose of this RFP to engage new providers.? Are existing training providers required to recertify through this process?*

Answer: The purpose of this RFP is to provide comprehensive career coaching and supportive services in addition to the technical training in high growth occupational areas which will lead to future career pathway advancement opportunities. This RFP does not replace or change the existing Eligible:

*Question #60: The “what percentage of your organization's Board identify as multi-racial or non-white? Question is greyed out, and I am unable to enter anything in the field and therefore unable to submit the form.*

Answer: This has been corrected.

*Question #61: Would financial careers training be considered “business and professional services” and qualify as an eligible industry skills training for this program? The training prepares participants for careers in the financial industry, such as bank tellers, relationship managers, customer service, assistant branch managers, etc.*

Answer: Yes, financial careers training would fall under the Business & Professional Services sector.

*Question #62: Can you please confirm if the deadline is on August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 PM?*

Answer: Career Pathway Proposals are due Monday, August 2,2021 by 4:00 CDT.

*Question #63: We have the question of our IRS 501(c)3 Tax Exempt Determination Letter is dated April of 2017. Do we need a new letter from the IRS, or should we only submit our Certificate of Good Standing?*

Answer: If it is applicable to your organization, you must submit an IRS 501(c) 3 Tax Exemption Determination Letter issued within the last three years. If you are incorporated as a not-for-profit you must also submit a Certificate of Good Standing. Further, if the current letter is expired, please submit the current letter along with the Good Standing Certificate and note if the renewal is in process.

*Question #64: How would we get an Industry Recognized Credential approved by the Workforce Partnership, and what would the timeframe be from start to finish?*

Answer: The Partnership does not approve Industry Recognized Credentials. The program must be certified by an accrediting body such as IBHE and the curriculum should lead to the participant passing the appropriate industry related exam.

*Question #65: Does the American Bankers Association’s Customer Service Representative Certificate count as an industry certified credential?*

Answer: Yes, that is an industry recognized credential.

*Question #66: Can a participant be part of a mixed cohort (regular students and Pathway Training Students)?*

Answer: Yes, participants may can be part of a mixed cohort group. The Career Pathway Training participants must receive the full services described in the RFP. Respondents must develop a cost allocation plan that appropriately charges costs to the Career Pathway Training Program.

*Question #67: What are the consequences and procedures if a student drops out from a course?*

Answer: That student will be counted as a negative and it will affect your program performance measures.

*Question #68: What are the consequences and actions if a student who graduates refuses employment?*

Answer: Once a participant is enrolled into the program, the student is counted in the organization's performance. Any participant who does not obtain employment will negatively impact the organization's placement rates, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter employment rate, median earnings, and training related placement goals.

*Questions #69: Are there contractual relationships between a student and a WIOA program that incentives students to seek employment and finish studies? What are the obligations to the parties?*

Answer: There is no contractual relationship between the student and WIOA program. However, each participant must sign an Individualized Employment Plan that outlines the steps to obtain employment.

*Question #70: Can a potential Pathway student apply for Title IV Financial Aid along with WIOA?*

Answer: Yes.

*Question #71: How and who makes the decision on determination of an applicant's eligibility? How long does the decision process take?*

Answer: As opposed to an ITA program, the Career Pathway provider is responsible for determining eligibility.

*Question #72: Can you explain the Adult eligibility criteria. Are low-income individuals that are 18 years old and older and do have basic skills eligible?*

Answer: Yes. Adult eligibility is defined as an individual who is 18 years old or older and legally able to work in the United States. Priority of services is given to individual who are basic skills deficient **OR** low income. Please see the link for the Adult Eligibility Policy letter: [Adult Eligibility 12.8.2016 \(14\).pdf](#)

*Question #73: Does a program have to be qualified to offer Title IV Financial Aid to students, to be eligible to recruit for Pathway Training Program?*

Answer: No.

*Question #74: Does the training program need to have an institutional accreditation even if it provides the pathway to industry recognized certifications.*

Answer: Yes. The training program or curriculum must be approved by an accrediting body.

*Question #75: Page 30 of the RFP includes a fillable checklist. The checklist is also included as a downloadable form on the RFP webpage. The checklist is fillable, but the checklist is not listed in the attachment transmittal requirements outlined on pages 28 & 29. Should the checklist be included in the transmittal of the proposal? If so, in which attachment.*

*Answer: Yes. Please include the checklist with your program proposal in Attachment 1.*