



CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

Opportunity Works

Sector-Driven Internships for Young Adults in Suburban Cook County

INITIAL FUNDING PERIOD:

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023, with potential for annual contract extensions

CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

69 W. WASHINGTON – SUITE 2860

CHICAGO, IL 60602

RESPONSES DUE:

Monday, December 5, 2022, by 4:00pm (CDT)

Proposals to be submitted electronically to OppWorksRFP@chicookworks.org

Bidders Webinar*: Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 1:00 – 3:00pm (CDT)

Link to attend Webinar:

<https://bit.ly/OppWorks2023>

Passcode: 181340

*** Attendance is not mandatory, but is highly encouraged ***

Direct all communication about this funding opportunity to: RFPquestions@chicookworks.org

Patrick Combs, Interim CEO
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

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Section 1: Purpose and Overview

A. Purpose of Request for Proposals (RFP):

Working in conjunction with Cook County's Office of the President, as well as Cook County's Bureau of Economic Development, the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (The Partnership) announces the release of funding to organizations providing workforce development services to young adults in suburban Cook County. The purpose of this solicitation is to identify and fund organizations that will help employers develop their future workforce by creating opportunities for young adults in the region to engage in career exploration and paid internships. In addition, this funding aims to serve the broader objective of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of Cook County residents by promoting coordinated programming on community level to support the long-term socioeconomic success of residents and businesses that have experienced negative health and economic impacts caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic

This RFP describes the specific services and activities The Partnership seeks and sets forth application requirements for eligible service providers ("respondents"). The Partnership will evaluate all timely submitted proposals and competitively award contracts to service providers whose submissions are most responsive to the need for services described herein.

B. Available Funding and Performance Period:

The Partnership will award funds to entities that demonstrate an ability to effectively deliver and manage services as described herein. All proposals must be comprehensive and address the full scope of services or demonstrate that the respondent plans to partner with other entities that collectively will deliver the full scope of services contemplated by this RFP.

The Partnership anticipates funding grant agreements effective January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, and expects to award contracts to service providers that deliver programming within the south and west suburbs of Cook County. The Partnership reserves the right to renew grant agreements for up to (3) three additional one-year extensions, not to exceed 48 months total based on funding availability and the selected respondent's achievement of specified metrics, ability to leverage funds, compliance with the program model and administrative requirements, and the grant renewal's conformity with The Partnership's vision for the Chicago Cook Workforce System.

The Partnership has entered into an agreement with Cook County to accept funding from federal and local sources to support career exploration and paid internships for young adults in high growth sectors critical to the County's economy including Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, Manufacturing, Information Technology, Construction, and Healthcare. The Office of the President of Cook County and The Partnership are also collaborating to secure additional funds from public and private sources that may be used to support the program through this RFP. Additional funds received by The Partnership may be contracted by expanding existing programs or by consideration of proposals not initially funded under this RFP. These decisions shall be

made at the discretion of The Partnership’s Board approved procurement policy.

C. Tentative Schedule of Events:

RFP Release	October 31, 2022
Bidders Webinar	November 9, 2022
Proposal Submittal Deadline	December 5, 2022
Service Provider Selection	December 2022
Anticipated Contract Start Date	January 1, 2023

D. Eligible Respondents:

Any governmental, not-for-profit, educational institution, or for-profit entity properly operating in accordance with Federal, State, and local law, and in business for at least three (3) years, may submit a proposal for consideration. Community based organizations in suburban Cook County, as well as businesses owned by women and people of color are encouraged to apply.

Additionally, entities are eligible respondents to this RFP only if they: 1) operate in accordance with Federal, State, and local law; 2) are currently eligible to do business with the City of Chicago, Cook County, the State of Illinois, and The Partnership; 3) possess the technical competence, administrative and fiscal capacity, and demonstrated fiduciary responsibility to accomplish the objectives and scope of work stated in this RFP.

In order to be considered, a respondent must have a direct service location within suburban Cook County or identify in their proposal a location that will be secured for occupancy as of the grant agreement start date if the respondent is selected and awarded a grant. Respondents must indicate their full addresses of administrative offices and each proposed service location identified in their proposals.

Respondents may submit proposals in which subcontractors are identified who will provide specific program components. Respondents may also identify organizations with which they will collaborate to enhance the project design. Any collaboration of two or more entities should clearly provide the following information in the narrative portions of the proposal:

- Identify the lead agency for the collaborative partnership
- State the roles and responsibilities of each collaborative partner
- Include an organizational chart for each organization and for the collaborative partnership
- Describe how funds will flow within the collaborative partnership
- Identify the percentage of each partner’s fiscal responsibility
- Identify the qualified fiscal agent for the collaborative partnership

Entities are ineligible if they: 1) are currently barred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by a Federal, State, County

or City department/agency, quasi-governmental agency, or The Partnership; 2) have existing grants with any Federal, State, County or City agency that have been suspended or otherwise not in good standing within the past two (2) years; 3) are not in compliance with the Illinois Department of Revenue or the Federal Internal Revenue Service or Federal Office of Management and Budget requirements; or 4) have had a previous Partnership contract terminated for inadequate performance within the previous 24-month period.

Awards made to entities subsequently found to have been ineligible may have funds clawed back at The Partnership's sole discretion.

E. Program Background and Summary:

The Covid-19 Pandemic (Pandemic) has exacerbated the negative impacts created by the history of structural racism and the decades long trend of the suburbanization of poverty in the Chicago region. Increased unemployment, lack of access to services, and disconnection from support systems has led to further destabilized communities, increased violence, and social isolation. These difficult realities disproportionately impact African American and Latinx communities. Suburban families – particularly in target areas of south and west suburbs – are strained on multiple fronts including the ability to access resources and employment options necessary for economic mobility and an equitable recovery. This is especially true for families that include people who are more likely to face discrimination in the job market, including young adults who are disconnected from education and school (Opportunity Youth).

In certain areas of the south and west suburbs, young adults are out of school and work at rates as high as 40%. With this large number of disconnected youth, the region is presented with an enormous opportunity to identify and develop the talents and skills of an underutilized and significant segment of the labor market. With the necessary support and training, these young adults can help meet the growing demand for qualified workers in Cook County's Manufacturing, Information Technology, Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics, Construction, Healthcare and other high-growth, high-demand industries. However, many young adults are unaware that these jobs are accessible to them. Internship programs are often the most effective way to introduce young adults to unfamiliar jobs and opportunities and to get them on their first step in a career pathway. These initiatives benefit businesses, young adults, and the regional economy.

The Partnership, therefore, seeks to identify and work with service providers to conduct programming that will provide young adults, ages 16-24, with a paid internship in the private sector with a focus on high-growth and/or high-demand industries. Using lessons learned from past programs and with guidance from employers within the targeted industries, The Partnership has developed a program model with defined requirements and quality standards. The service providers will assign all youth to a career mentor and provide them with foundational skills training and wrap-around support prior to placing them in internships that support career exploration in Cook County's high-growth, high-demand industry sectors. Throughout the internship, the service provider will engage young people in ongoing, weekly activities, including additional foundational skills training, digital literacy training, job shadowing, employer panels,

field trips, and peer support groups. The Partnership and/or the service provider will ask employers to host young adults for at least six weeks, exposing them to career opportunities and pathways within the sector. Services will be available to all eligible suburban Cook County residents and will be targeted towards communities that have been hardest hit by the pandemic and the history of disinvestment and structural racism.

To accomplish its goals The Partnership seeks to identify and work with service providers to implement two (2) programs serving Opportunity Youth: 1) Opportunity Works and 2) Opportunity Summer. Opportunity Works programming will be offered all year long and a key differentiator to this program is that it targets Opportunity Youth who are out-of-school during enrollment. The Opportunity Summer program will be implemented in a manner to provide young adults with paid internships during the summer months (June – August) and aims to enroll young adults from the south and west suburbs who have an interest in career exploration.

Goals and Metrics:

Opportunity Works and Opportunity Summer will help businesses build talent and help youth begin career pathways. The Partnership has identified goals and metrics under each of the following broader areas:

- I. Help Businesses Build Talent
 - a. Goals:
 - i. Businesses will build stronger community connections
 - ii. Businesses will access resources through the public workforce system
 - iii. Businesses will identify and develop the future workforce
 - b. Metrics:
 - i. Number of internships provided by businesses
 - ii. Number of organizations providing services to youth and businesses

- II. Help Youth Begin Career Pathways
 - a. Goals:
 - i. Youth will earn income while learning about local career opportunities
 - ii. Youth will gain sector-based experience
 - iii. Youth will access employment and education resources
 - b. Metrics:
 - i. Number of youth enrolled in programming
 - ii. Number of youth that participate in foundational skills training
 - iii. Number of youth that participate in digital literacy training
 - iv. Number of youth that participate in an internship
 - v. Number of youth that complete an internship
 - vi. Number of youth that participate in career exploration
 - vii. Number of youth that transition to a workforce program or post-secondary training/education

The Partnership will identify minimum thresholds for each of the metrics that the selected

respondents will be required to meet. The Partnership may also identify additional goals and metrics.

Target Population:

Opportunity Works

Opportunity Works will target unemployed young adults, ages 16-24, with a focus on individuals who reside in south and west suburban Cook County. However, young adults from across suburban Cook County will be eligible for the program if they are unemployed AND meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Self or family socioeconomic status negatively impacted by Covid-19 pandemic.
2. Reside in an income-eligible household, which includes households that meet income criteria for any one of the following programs:
 - a. National School Lunch Program
 - b. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act
 - c. Food Stamps/ SNAP Program
 - d. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
 - e. Supplemental Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance
 - f. Residents of Public Housing
 - g. Self or family income that does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
3. Face one or more of the following barriers to employment:
 - a. Is not in school and does not have a high school diploma or equivalent
 - b. Is an English language learner
 - c. Is currently involved or has history of involvement with the justice system
 - d. Is homeless, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, in foster care or 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
 - e. Is pregnant or parenting
 - f. Is an individual with a disability

Opportunity Works will prioritize serving Opportunity Youth; no more than 30% of participants may be in-school youth. Also, in recognition of the transient housing patterns faced by many of the area's young adults, The Partnership will also permit each respondent to serve a small number of City of Chicago residents; up to 10% of enrolled young adults may be residents of Chicago.

Opportunity Summer

Opportunity Summer serves young adults, ages 16-24, who live in suburban Cook County and experienced negative impact from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Service providers must adhere to the eligibility requirements when selecting participants for Opportunity Works or Opportunity Summer. Service providers must follow The Partnership's established eligibility procedures and any subsequent policy/procedure memos or emails that

clarify changes to the eligibility process. Service providers must establish and document eligibility following The Partnership's guidance.

F. Overview of The Partnership:

Created in 2012, The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is an umbrella organization operating the public workforce system in Cook County, inclusive of Chicago. The Partnership combines federal and philanthropic resources to broaden the reach and impact of workforce development services for both employers and job seekers. The Partnership has programmatic and administrative responsibility for all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services provided in Cook County, inclusive of Chicago. The Partnership administers a comprehensive workforce development system with multiple entry points throughout Chicago and suburban Cook County where job seekers and businesses can access the full range of available services and benefits. Our network comprises community-based delegate agencies, sector-based training providers, career pathway programs, industry-focused sector centers, and 10 high-capacity American Job Centers (AJCs). All efforts put forth by The Partnership are guided by the following vision, mission, and values.

Our Vision: Every person has the opportunity to build a career; every business has the talent to grow and compete in a global economy.

Our Mission: To create, promote, and effectively manage a network of workforce development organizations that:

- Designs innovative solutions to address business needs, and,
- Prepares individuals for, and connects them to, career opportunities.

Our Values:

- **Collaboration:** We strategically engage a variety of local, regional, state, and national partners in workforce and economic development to ensure program effectiveness. The breadth of these activities allows us to connect businesses and individuals to a wide array of resources.
- **Innovation:** We design and implement initiatives that result in dynamic outcomes for businesses and job seekers alike. We seek creative solutions to current and future workforce development challenges.
- **Transparency:** We clearly communicate our expectations, policies, and processes to stakeholders and partners. We openly and publicly share the results of our initiatives.
- **Financial Responsibility and Stewardship:** As stewards of public, private, and philanthropic funds, we ensure effective and efficient management of our resources to achieve the maximum returns on investment and greatest impact on the business or individual served.
- **Quality:** We commit to continuous improvement. We aspire to a standard of excellence that ensures the delivery of high caliber services for all stakeholders while identifying opportunities for further growth.

- **Dignity of Work:** We believe in the value of work and the mutually beneficial impact that it has on individuals and the companies that employ them. We support investment in human capital as a means of strengthening local communities and the regional economy.
- **Equity:** We intentionally acknowledge systems of oppression when providing the resources and supports people need to reach their full economic and human potential. We actively work to eliminate disparities people experience based on race/ethnicity, disability, background, gender, age, sexual orientation, or economic and educational status. We partner with employers who share our belief and are committed to the idea that all residents of our region can achieve a meaningful career that provides family-sustaining income.

Youth Vision and Statement of Principles:

The Partnership and the Youth Council of the Workforce Innovation Board envision a system where all young adults in the Chicago Cook region are able to easily access a comprehensive and integrated set of education and training supports that increases the number of young adults productively engaged in the workforce, thereby increasing self-sufficiency and reducing poverty. The Partnership seeks to be a leader in empowering “Opportunity Youth” (young adults, ages 16-24, who are disconnected from school and work) to obtain employment, re-engage in school, prepare for post-secondary education and/or connect to industry-focused education and training programs.

The Partnership seeks to:

- 1) Align youth-serving institutions in order to ease access, reduce duplication, close service gaps and promote collaboration;
- 2) Decrease the number of Opportunity Youth through successful attachment to the labor market, entry into career pathways, increased education and/or paid work experience; and
- 3) Improve outcomes for youth and young adults through placement in employment or education, attainment of industry-recognized degrees or certificates, and increased literacy and numeracy gains.

We will invest in programs that employ best practices and incorporate concepts and approaches of (1) youth development that meet the psycho/social/emotional needs of young people, (2) education and workforce strategies, and (3) wrap-around services with particular focus on employment outcomes. Specifically, through this RFP, The Partnership will support projects that:

- Employ proven recruitment strategies to effectively outreach, engage, enroll, and retain out of school youth
- Demonstrate meaningful partnerships with accredited higher education institutions, employers in high growth industries and other relevant organizations and service providers that support job, internship, and educational opportunities for youth

- Provide access and referrals to long term career development services such as occupational training leading to unsubsidized employment in high demand industries with wage progression
- Provide connections to alternative education programs that allow participants to obtain high school diplomas/equivalents and offer college/career preparation for students who are disconnected from school and/or off-track to graduate
- Use structured internships, such as paid work experiences, work-based learning, and pre-apprenticeship programs, and career exploration, while providing maximum opportunities for youth to learn theoretical and practical skills relevant to their career interests
- Provide intensive case management and support services, including financial literacy education, to help youth overcome complex barriers and to successfully complete programs, and secure and retain employment
- Incorporate trauma-informed approaches into intensive case management models
- Use socio-emotional learning skills to better equip youth with non-cognitive abilities needed for successful employment
- Utilize partnerships and collaborations to ensure a seamless continuum of services

Section 2: Description of Services

Service providers will be responsible for employer engagement and direct service components of this two-prong program. Service providers must identify eligible youth to participate in each program and provide them with age-appropriate foundational skills training, sector specific training when appropriate, and paid meaningful internships in conjunction with career mentoring and support services.

A. Recruitment:

Service providers will conduct creative outreach and recruitment activities to identify young adults from the target population to apply for participation in the program. The Partnership will also assist with recruitment by establishing referral relationships with a variety of entities, including juvenile justice agencies, detention facilities, offices of elected officials, and other youth-serving organizations. The Partnership will require selected service providers to outreach all youth who are referred to the service providers through the centralized application process described below. If the service provider does not enroll the youth into the Opportunity Works or Opportunity Summer program, they must refer the youth to other community resources. To ensure that youth from referral partners are served, The Partnership may require that selected respondents set aside a portion of their contracted slots for youth not identified by the respondent. **However, service providers will be solely responsible for meeting their contracted enrollment goals.**

B. Application:

Young adults will apply to participate in Opportunity Works and Opportunity Summer programming through a centralized online application site that collects basic contact information and career interests of applicants. The Partnership will create and maintain the online application and the contracted service providers and referral partners will direct young adults to complete the application. The Partnership will screen applicants to make sure they meet the age requirements and will then forward applications to the service provider that is closest to the home residence of the young adults. If selected service providers propose to focus on specific sectors, The Partnership will also attempt to refer youth based on their stated career interests. Young adults applying to the program will also be able to indicate whether they prefer a specific service provider.

C. Eligibility and Intake:

The service provider is responsible for completing a basic intake assessment and must secure documentation that each youth meets the eligibility criteria defined previously. The Partnership will provide guidance on allowable and acceptable documentation at the start of the program. All documentation must be secured prior to the start of the paid internship. In addition to eligibility determination, the service provider must ensure that each participant completes all of the necessary tax and payroll paperwork. Any liability resulting from a failure to do any of these tasks will remain the sole responsibility of the service provider.

D. Orientation and Foundational Skills Training:

The service provider must provide each participant with a thorough orientation to the program. The orientation must explain at minimum the program rules and expectations, the paycheck or stipend process including the dates for paycheck or stipend disbursement, program schedules, and key contact information.

The Opportunity Works and Opportunity Summer model is designed to support young adults in career exploration of high-growth sectors in Cook County. Contracted service providers will help young adults attain the foundational skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. Foundational skills are the non-cognitive skills demanded by all or most employers and are sometimes referred to as “soft skills,” “job readiness,” or “workplace readiness” skills. The service provider must engage participants at a minimum of one week of foundational skills training at the start of the program, utilizing a curriculum that effectively covers the core competencies outlined by The Partnership below:

- Self-awareness, self-interest, and planning for success
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Social and emotional development
- Job seeking skills including resume and interview preparation
- Effective work habits, punctuality, workplace communication, and other job keeping skills
- Personal and business ethics
- Financial literacy

Digital Literacy Training – Opportunity Works ONLY

Participants of Opportunity Works only will be required to also participate in digital literacy training. Partner agencies will help young adults attain the basic digital literacy skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online. Digital literacy refers to an individual’s ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information through typing and other media on various digital platforms. Digital literacy means having the skills you need to live, learn, and work in a society where communication and access to information is increasingly through digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices. Partner agencies must engage participants in digital literacy training utilizing curriculum that effectively covers the core competencies outlined by The Partnership below:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Basic Computer Skills
- Internet Basics

The curriculum can be delivered during the initial week or more of training and/or through the ongoing training sessions described below. Training practices should be trauma informed and individualized to participant experience to greatest extent possible. The Partnership may also identify an existing evidence-based curriculum to be used by selected respondents.

E. Career Mentorship and Planning:

Career mentors are the staff members that provide individualized services to participants. Some service providers refer to these staff as career coaches, case managers, or youth development specialists. The Partnership uses the term “career mentor” to recognize the unique relationship that effective staff members develop with young adults. Providing Opportunity Youth with quality career exploration, training and internship services is much more impactful when coupled with one-on-one support and mentoring. Staff members are often required to provide young participants with guidance, motivation, and a positive example, as they assist them in pursuing employment and training goals. They serve as mentors, even when not specifically identified as such.

The service provider is expected to employ a sufficient number of career mentors to provide a 1:15 staff to youth ratio for Opportunity Works programming and a 1:20 staff to youth ratio for Opportunity Summer programming. This prescribed ratio can also be met with other frontline staff fully dedicated to providing services, training, and support to young adults (e.g., instructors, retention specialists.). The service provider will assign the young adult to a career mentor upon intake. The career mentor provides the young person with mentoring, career planning, and case management services.

The Partnership strongly encourages service providers to employ career mentors who reside in the target communities. Career mentors should be 25 years or older and have at least 3 years of related work experience. Please note that some referral sources, such as juvenile justice agencies or schools, may require that staff complete a criminal background check and meet specific qualifications prior to working with youth.

The Partnership also encourages service providers to connect youth to volunteer mentors, from the partner businesses and/or community, if they have the existing infrastructure to support such programming.

The service provider will conduct individual assessments that are comprehensive in nature and assess the participant’s experience, career interests, skills, and abilities, as well as any needs for additional support. The service provider and the young adult should use the results of the assessment to create an individualized career plan that identifies short and long-term employment and education goals, and supports quality job matching, wage progression, and career ladder opportunities. Because the individualized career plan will extend past the period of performance of programming, it must include clear action steps for connecting the young adult to longer-term workforce and education services.

F. Industry-Recognized Training and Credentials:

When appropriate and valuable, The Partnership encourages service providers to provide young adults with industry-recognized training and/or credentials. The service provider should provide young adults with a stipend while they are engaged in sector specific or foundational skills training to ensure maximum program retention and value to the participant.

G. Paid Internship:

All participants must be engaged in a paid internship that is at least six (6) weeks in length with a private sector employer in a high-demand, high-growth industry. The Partnership is planning on a cost per participant that allows for an average of 30 hours per week of paid internship experience for Opportunity Works and 20-25 hours per week for Opportunity Summer. Respondents should propose a program schedule that enables them to achieve the stated outcomes and provide quality services. The respondent may choose to enroll all participants at the same time, or they may choose to utilize a cohort model. The respondent should clearly outline the plan in the requested timeline and the budget should reflect a staffing plan that permits the above-mentioned 1:15 staff to youth ratio for Opportunity Works and 1:20 staff to youth ratio for Opportunity Summer.

The internship can involve one or more of the following types of activities:

- Work experience, where the participant performs functions that are typically assigned to staff employed by the business. In these cases, the business is directly benefiting from the work being performed by the participant;
- Job shadowing, where the participant spends time with one or more employees to learn more about their job duties and expectations and the work conducted by the business in general; or
- Training or pre-apprenticeship programs, where the participant is engaged in formal or informal training conducted by the employer or their designee. The training could take place in a classroom, one-on-one or in a small group setting

The service provider must incorporate strong relationships with businesses and proven placement strategies into the model. The Partnership is also identifying employers who are willing to host young adults in internships and The Partnership will provide employers with technical assistance in developing the structure and scope of the internships. The Partnership will match selected service providers with interested businesses; however, The Partnership still expects service providers to recruit businesses and develop internship opportunities.

The service provider must execute and follow a work site agreement (template to be provided by The Partnership) with the host site. The service provider must ensure that the work site host provides appropriate supervision for the youth to understand their responsibilities and complete their work assignments, job shadowing or training activities. The service provider must work with the business to develop a job description or training plan. The service provider must also conduct periodic monitoring of the work site (on-site visits at a minimum of every three weeks) to ensure proper compliance with the work-site agreement.

H. Career Exploration and Concurrent Training:

Service providers should conduct career exploration activities with structured opportunities for youth to explore a range of career options in a particular industry, thereby developing work-readiness and industry-relevant competencies. Service providers must engage participants in ongoing, weekly training and/or activities that promote career exploration and skill building

outside of their work site experience. Training and activities include, but are not limited to sector specific training, job shadowing opportunities, employer panels, interview preparation and other foundational skills.

I. Support Services:

Service providers should utilize program funds for clothing, supplies and transportation expenses necessary for the young adult to participate in the program. The Partnership encourages agencies to think creatively about transportation solutions that support youth in commuting to training and placement opportunities in a timely manner. Respondents should include funds for drug screening and/or criminal background checks during the intake process in their budget, to ensure that participants can successfully meet employer’s safety requirements for interns.

J. Connection to employment and/or longer-term services (Opportunity Works ONLY):

The service provider must connect all Opportunity Works participants to unsubsidized employment or to a workforce or education program that enables the participant to work towards their identified career goal. The service provider must demonstrate quality relationships with employers, post-secondary educational institutions, vocational training programs and other relevant community resources in their response.

Section 3: Administrative Requirements

A. Data and Customer Tracking System:

Selected respondents will be required to use Career Connect, The Partnership's integrated data management system, to record and track all participant activities, including services rendered and outcomes achieved. All selected respondents will be required to attend training on Career Connect. In addition to reporting and tracking customers through Career Connect, selected providers must submit quarterly reports that document participant outcomes on key benchmarks.

B. File Records, Retention and Ownership:

Selected respondents must retain program files and records, including customer files, in compliance with The Partnership's record retention policies. Selected respondents must maintain and secure accurate case files for every enrolled participant. Case files must contain a variety of documentation including, but not limited to: program eligibility; intake form; assessment information; individual career plan; time and attendance sheets; work site location and information; progress reports; and case notes.

Selected respondents must allow access to The Partnership and its representatives to all program materials, staff, and participants. In addition, selected respondents are required to maintain all files and records for five (5) years, beginning on the last day of the program year.

C. Oversight, Evaluation and Planning:

The Partnership will monitor and evaluate selected respondents to ensure program compliance and to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the service strategies. External monitoring and evaluation may also be conducted periodically by any agency that provides funds used by The Partnership to contract for services in the area's workforce system.

The Partnership staff will conduct site visits with each service provider to review and monitor the program. During the review, The Partnership staff will check files for eligibility and progress reports, work site agreements and customer wage or stipend records. The Partnership staff will also visit worksite locations.

D. Accessibility and Equal Opportunity:

The Partnership is committed to equal access for all customers to all services. All bidders must ensure equal opportunity for all individuals. No individual in The Partnership's regional area shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any funded program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, English proficiency, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or belief. All bidders are expected to demonstrate full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) and all other equal opportunity laws. This involves ensuring that staff receive accessibility training and may involve developing accessibility plans. All respondents must ensure all written materials and communications include the statement: ***"Reasonable accommodations and auxiliary equipment and services are available upon request."***

E. Paid Internships:

The selected respondent will be solely responsible for administering payments to program participants and these costs should be included in the proposal budget. Reasonable incentives, allowances, stipends, and wages are allowable expenditures under the Cook County Internship Program, provided that the provision of an incentive or stipend is included in the participant's individual plan. The selected respondent must have and adhere to a written policy related to payments to youth. The Partnership will not provide any additional funding to any service provider to cover costs related to payments to youth.

The selected respondent should determine whether to treat payments to youth for paid internships as stipends, incentives, or wages, using the guidelines below:

1. Stipends. A stipend is a fixed regular small payment made to a participant during the period of his or her enrollment to encourage the participant to engage in training services. The design of work experience programs may include reasonable stipends for the engagement of participants in unpaid work experience and other combined activities, such as classroom instruction. Stipends may not exceed the Federal, Illinois, or Cook County minimum wage, whichever is higher. Attendance in the activity must be documented as the basis for stipend payments. Provision of stipends must be included in the individual plan.

2. Incentives. An incentive is a payment to a participant for the successful participation and achievement of expected outcomes as defined in the participant's individual plan. The incentive must be linked to an achievement and must be tied to training and education, a foundational skill and/or an occupational skill-attainment goal identified in the individual plan. Such achievements must be documented in the participant's file as the basis for incentive payments.

3. Wages/Employment Relationship. According to the Wage and Hour Division of the US Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, if ALL of the following six (6) elements exist, the work experience can be considered a training situation. The participant is NOT an employee of the employer site if:

- a) The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is essentially a training experience similar to a vocational school;
- b) The registrant is primarily the beneficiary of the experience;
- c) Regular employees are not displaced, and the experience is closely supervised/observed;
- d) The "employer" that hosts the experience derives no immediate or significant advantage (and may experience an actual downside);
- e) The participant is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the experience; and
- f) There is a mutual understanding between the participant and the host agency that the participant is not entitled to wages for this time because the activity is essentially a training experience.

If any of the above six (6) conditions are not met, the participant MUST be considered an employee.

In these cases, selected respondents must serve as the employer of record and must have the capacity to administer their own payroll in a timely manner. Contracted respondents must pay all applicable payroll taxes of program participants and comply with all laws and regulations as the employer of record. Contracted respondents must maintain payroll records and time sheets for each participant.

F. Other Fiscal Requirements and Policies:

1. Respondents are permitted, but not required, to provide programming during the entire contract period of January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. Respondents should propose a program schedule that enables them to achieve the stated outcomes and provide quality services. The respondent may choose to enroll all participants at the same time, or they may choose to utilize a cohort model. The respondent should clearly outline the plan in the requested timeline and the budget should reflect a staffing plan that permits the required staff to youth ratio.

2. Respondent's administrative and/or indirect costs must not exceed 10% of the total budget. The Partnership will not consider administrative costs expenses for staff who are responsible for providing services directly to youth.

3. Respondent must meet the staff to youth ratio in their budget as defined previously.

4. Respondent must budget for participants to engage in a paid internship that takes place for at least six weeks at approximately 30 hours per week for Opportunity Works and 20-25 hours per week for Opportunity Summer. The respondent should also budget for stipend payments to youth during foundational and sector-specific skills training. If the respondent proposes an internship structure that varies from these guidelines, they must provide clear justification in their proposal response.

5. Respondent must include an adequate level of funds for supportive services, including transportation, necessary work attire, and, if required by the targeted industry employer partners, drug screening and criminal background checks.

6. If requested and necessary, The Partnership may provide selected respondents with a funding advance, up to 40% of the total award, to cover expenses related to payroll administration.

6. Selected respondents must submit vouchers requesting reimbursement on a monthly basis. Vouchers must be submitted with the following supporting documentation:

- Supportive services – Support services can only be reimbursed when dispersed to the clients. Support services paid for in advance of distribution to participants will not be reimbursed. Participant signatures are required to ascertain that a participant has received the support.
- Paid Internship – Payroll Registers or Stipend documentation
- Paid Internship – Timesheets (signed off by the participant and the participant's work site or training supervisor)

Section 4: Submission Process and Instructions

A. Period of Solicitation. This RFP will be released on Monday, October 31, 2022. The deadline to submit a response to the RFP is Monday, December 5, 2022, no later than 4:00 pm (CT). Submit proposals electronically to OppWorksRFP@chicookworks.org.

B. RFP Inquiries, Questions and Answers:

The primary mode of communication between The Partnership and potential bidders will occur via www.chicookworks.org. All questions pertaining to the RFP must be received in writing via email at RFPquestions@chicookworks.org by 4:00 pm (CT) Monday, November 14, 2022. Use subject line "Opportunity Works RFP."

The Question and Answer page will be posted on The Partnership's website www.chicookworks.org. The Partnership anticipates posting answers to all questions by Wednesday, November 16, 2022, at 4:00 pm (CT). It is the bidder's responsibility to check the website page frequently to stay apprised throughout the process. Only those questions directed to the above email will be answered. Questions will not be answered over the phone or in person. Questions received after November 14, 2022, will not receive a response.

C. Bidder Webinar:

The Partnership will host a Bidder Webinar for all prospective respondents to this RFP. At this session, The Partnership staff will review program information, key proposal requirements, contract terms and conditions and respond to questions. Attendance is highly recommended. Other than during the Bidder Webinar, staff members are unable to provide technical assistance during the application process.

Bidder Webinar will be held on Wednesday, November 9, 2022, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM (CT)

Link to Attend Webinar
<https://bit.ly/OppWorks2023>
Passcode: 181340

Every effort will be made at the webinar to answer questions submitted that day; however, all questions will be answered and posted on the website. No answers are final until posted on the website.

D. Proposal Review and Evaluation Process:

Program Review

Applications will be evaluated by a team of reviewers, which may include outside experts and staff. An entity's failure to submit a complete proposal or to respond in whole or in part to RFP requirements may cause The Partnership to deem the proposal non-responsive and thus ineligible for review.

Fiscal Review

The Partnership will also conduct a fiscal review of all qualified proposals. We will review proposal budgets, agency audits, leveraged funds and responses to questions related to fiscal operations. The Partnership reserves the right to review and request further information regarding the respondent’s financial situation, if not sufficiently outlined in the submitted audit(s). The Partnership reserves the right to assess the risk posed by any recent, current, or potential litigation, court action, investigation, audit, bankruptcy, receivership, financial insolvency, merger, acquisition, or other event that might affect an organization’s ability to operate the requested program.

The review team will perform an in-depth evaluation of all responsive proposals based upon the criteria herein. Prior to its final funding decision, The Partnership may also: 1) meet with representatives of the responding entity to discuss the proposed program and budget; 2) identify and/or negotiate program or budget changes the responding entity must make as a condition of funding; and 3) identify other documentation the entity must provide as a condition of funding. Entities that fail to meet the evaluation criteria specified herein, or proposals that do not meet the service requirements will not receive further consideration for funding. Failure to meet evaluation criteria can include, but is not limited to, non-responsive language in the submission, failure to clearly address all areas in the project narrative as required, lack of required documentation, and proposing programs, which do not address the specific needs of the population(s) being targeted.

E. Evaluation Criteria:

The Partnership is not required to contract with the entity receiving the highest average score as a result of the proposal review process. Proposals evaluated with an average score below 70 of a possible 100 points may not be considered. Proposals that do not meet minimum standards will be considered non-responsive. The Partnership reserves the right to contract with any respondent that falls within the acceptable point range.

All proposals will be scored according to the evaluation criteria and rank ordered from highest to lowest score. A recommended funding level will be determined based on a number of factors including overall ranking of proposal rating scores, the availability of funds, the number of applications submitted, geographic factors, reasonable unit cost as determined by The Partnership, the need for the proposed services, and past performance.

Criteria	Point Value
Organizational History and Experience	10
Staffing Plan, Qualifications, and Experience	10
Program Description	30
Past Performance and Planned Outcomes	20
Fiscal Capacity and Budget	30
Total Points Available	100

F. Limitations:

The Partnership shall not pay for any costs incurred by the applicant agencies in the completion of this RFP. Submission of an RFP does not, in any way, obligate The Partnership to award a contract. The Partnership reserves the right to accept or reject any applications, make awards based on criteria other than raw scores, (e.g., inter alia, geography and populations served), to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP, if it is in the best interest of The Partnership to do so. The Partnership may require successful applicants to participate in contract negotiations prior to contract finalization. The Partnership shall reserve the right to terminate, with or without cause, any contract entered into as a result of this RFP process.

G. Disclaimers:

All contract awards by The Partnership, pursuant to this RFP, are contingent upon the availability of funds. Respondents are liable for any and all costs incurred prior to the execution of a contract with The Partnership. Selected respondents should consider award letters from The Partnership as a contract that authorizes the selected respondent to begin incurring allowable expenses related to the proposed program.

The Partnership also reserves the right to:

- Rescind an award and/or reallocate the funding to another applicant should the successful respondent fail to execute its grant agreement in a timely fashion;
- Increase funding levels for any or all selected respondents pursuant to this RFP, if additional funds become available, based on selected respondent's performance, effectiveness and other recorded metrics;
- Change and amend as necessary its policies or procedures governing the delivery or scope of services described herein;
- Perform an assessment of the risk that any recent, current, or potential litigation, court action, investigation, audit, bankruptcy, receivership, financial insolvency, merger, acquisition, or other event might have on an organization's ability to operate a proposed program.

H. Notice of Award:

All respondents will be notified by email as to their award status. Unsuccessful respondents are encouraged to re-apply in subsequent funding cycles.

I. Disallowed Costs and Cancellations:

Successful proposals must accept liability for all aspects of any program conducted under

contract with The Partnership. The successful respondents will be liable for any disallowed costs or illegal expenditure of funds or program operations conducted. The Partnership reserves the right to cancel an award immediately if new state or federal regulations or policy makes it necessary to change the program purpose or content substantially, or to prohibit such a program.

J. Contracting:

The Partnership reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. No program activity may begin prior to the execution of an award letter and/or contractual agreement between the successful bidder and The Partnership. Reductions in the funding level of any contract resulting from this solicitation process may be considered during the contract period when a bidder fails to meet expenditure, participant, and/or outcome goals specified in the contract or when anticipated funding is not forthcoming from federal or state governments. The Partnership reserves the right to determine both the number and the funding levels of contracts finally awarded. Such a determination will depend upon overall fund availability and other factors arising during the proposal review process.

L. Cost and Negotiations:

The Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received and to negotiate offers on modifications to proposals. Bids submitted which are over the maximum amount of funds specified for this RFP will be rejected. The proposal warrants that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFP are not in excess of those that would be charged any other individual for the same services performed by the bidder.

M. Modification of Contracts:

Any contract awarded pursuant to this RFP may be unilaterally modified by The Partnership upon written notice to the contractor under the following circumstances:

- a. Contractor fails to meet performance and service expectations set forth in the contract, or
- b. Cook County and/or private funding sources increase, reduce, or withdraw funds allocated to The Partnership, which impacts services solicited under this RFP, or
- c. There is a change in funder regulations, local laws, or applicable policies and procedures.

N. Electronic Submittal Procedure:

Submittal Address and Deadline

To be considered for funding, respondents must submit a complete response to this RFP as described herein. All proposals must be submitted electronically to

OppWorksRFP@chicookworks.org. For email subject line use "Opportunity Works RFP 2023 – Agency Name".

RFP responses must be received no later than 4:00 PM (CT) on Monday, December 5th, 2022. Proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted.

For the purposes of electronic submission, originals are scans of paper documents that contain **original signatures in blue ink** of the President, CEO, or equivalent person with legal signature authority for the organization and **marked "Original."**

If respondent organization is unable to provide scanned signature originals, include unsigned forms in submitted proposal and include the following statement in the email body of submission: **"Respondent required electronic signature follow-up."**

The Partnership will contact your organization to obtain the electronic signature of its authorized signatory following receipt of your proposal. Please note that the electronic signature process may occur after the proposal submittal deadline. Proposals that include unsigned forms but are otherwise complete will be considered complete at the time of submission so long as respondents comply with the instructions herein regarding electronic signature follow-up.

Technical Problems with Submission

If respondent is experiencing a technical problem when submitting proposal (e.g., file size is too large), immediately email RFPquestions@chicookworks.org to explain the program. Enter "submission problem + agency name" in the email subject line.

Proposal Submission Parameters

Narrative responses must be formatted as follows:

- A maximum of 15 pages excluding the attachments
- 8.5 x 11 inch (letter size)
- One-inch margins
- 12-point font
- Double-spaced
- Numbered pages with organizational name in footer

<i>Electronic Application Submission</i>	<i>Items to Include</i>
Subject Line of Email	Opportunity Works 2023 – Agency Name
Body of Email	Opportunity Works 2023 RFP List of Email Attachments Organization Name Organization Address Contact Person for Proposal Contact Email and Phone Number **If applicable include statement: “Electronic Signature Follow-Up”
Attachment 1 Labeled: OppWorks2023_AgencyName_Program As one PDF	Respondent Information Form Executive Summary Proposal Narrative Foundational Skills Curriculum Outline Letters of Commitment/MOUs with Employers and other Partners Timeline of Activities
Attachment 2 Labeled: OppWorks2023_AgencyName_Fiscal As one PDF	Budget Summary and Narrative W-9 List of Board Members Tax Exemption Letter Certificate of Good Standing Cost Allocation Plan Indirect Cost of Determination Letter Financial Statement Fiscal Policies and Procedures
Attachment 3 Labeled: OppWorks2023_AgencyName_Budget As Excel	Budget Summary and Narrative

Completed RFP responses must be submitted electronically to: OppWorksRFP@chicookworks.org

RFP responses must be received before or by 4:00 PM CDT on Monday, December 5th, 2022.

Proposals received after this date and time will not be accepted.

Section 5: Proposal Guidelines and Scoring Criteria

All proposals must be organized and assembled as described in this Section.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary (1 page only) must be submitted on the organization's letterhead and must provide:

1. An overview of the organization's qualifications, including the number of years it has successfully provided workforce and/or training services to young adults;
2. The number of young adults that the organization is proposing to serve, the sectors the organization intends to target, and a concise description of the organization's capacity to successfully connect young people to employers in the target sectors; and,
3. The amount of funding requested.

Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 15 pages)

The proposal narrative must provide specific detailed responses and relevant organizational data for the items listed below:

I. Organizational History and Experience (10 points)

1. Provide a concise description of your organization including mission and vision statements. Describe the relevant experience of the organization and partners/sub-contractors within the past five years in providing comparable youth services as described in this RFP. Identify all partners (if applicable) and briefly explain their roles in the program model.
2. Describe your experience working with businesses and industry leaders in the industries you plan to target. Describe any experience your organization has developing and implementing internship programs for young adults, as defined in Section 2. What employer relationships do you have in place for internships? Describe your track record placing young adults into unsubsidized employment in the targeted industries.
3. Describe how the proposed program will integrate into your current structure and services through alignment of staff, physical and financial resources.

II. Staffing Plan, Qualifications, and Experience (10 points)

1. Identify proposed staff and specify their qualifications and tenure with the organization. Discuss your agency's overall staffing and management structure.
2. Discuss your organization's experience delivering sector focused internship programming and ability to support youth career development and business engagement.

III. Program Description (30 points)

1. Identify the industry sector(s) you plan to target. Describe in detail your strategies

for outreach, recruitment, enrolling and orienting youth to your program. Please identify any unique strategies. Describe how youth will be assessed upon enrollment. Include a description of any tools or methods used to determine the following: levels of basic academic skills, foundational skills, interests and aptitudes, occupational skills, and supportive service needs. Explain how these assessments inform the individual plan for youth.

2. Describe how your organization's foundational skills training curriculum meets the core competencies outlined in this RFP. Be specific regarding hours of programming, curricula and tools used and staff involved in the process. Explain the rationale behind the proposed length, frequency and, if applicable, additional content of the training. Please attach an outline of the curriculum and, if available, proposed foundational skills training schedule.
3. Describe your plan for the required ongoing career exploration activities and supplemental foundational skills and other training. Describe any additional strategies your organization could employ that generate participant excitement for locally accessible career tracks. If you plan to offer industry-recognized training and/or credentials, please describe your plan for doing so and the evidence that the training and credentials meet employer need and demand and/or provide a clear benefit to participants.
4. Describe your strategy for recruiting employers and developing internship opportunities. Describe your plan for onboarding employers to the proposed internship program and for providing them with support throughout the program. Explain how you will ensure that participants receive adequate supervision and guidance during their placements with employers. Include letters of commitment and/or MOUs with employers willing to host youth in the proposed program.
5. Describe your plan for connecting participants to unsubsidized employment or a longer-term workforce, training or education program after the internship concludes. Identify existing relationships with workforce and training providers. Include letters of commitment or MOUs from organizations that are willing to dedicate resources to the program.
6. Include a timeline of key activities. At a minimum, specify when training and internships begin and end. If there is more than one start date, specify the number of young adults enrolled into each cohort.

IV. Past and Planned Outcomes (20 points)

1. Include a list, in table format, of up to 3 similar grants along with the award amount, targeted key benchmarks and your outcomes.
2. Provide a list of planned outcomes for the Opportunity Works program. At a minimum include:
 - i. Number of youth that participate in foundational skills training
 - ii. Number of youth that participate in digital literacy training
 - iii. Number of youth that participate in an internship
 - iv. Number of youth that complete an internship

- v. Number of youth that participate in career exploration
 - vi. Number of youth that transition to a workforce program or post-secondary training/education or unsubsidized employment
3. Provide a list of planned outcomes for the Opportunity Summer program. At a minimum include:
 - i. Number of youth that participate in foundational skills training
 - ii. Number of youth that participate in an internship
 - iii. Number of youth that complete an internship
 - iv. Number of youth that participate in career exploration
 4. Describe your ability to meet program goals or metrics.
 5. Explain your process for internally monitoring your performance on an on-going basis. Identify who will be responsible for data, reporting and general oversight.

V. Financial Structure and Cost Effectiveness (30 points)

1. Describe the basis on which the requested amount was calculated. Identify an average unit cost per participant and provide an explanation to justify this unit cost. Identify the staff to participant ratio.
2. Describe the agency's fiscal capacity, including a description of any other grants over \$100,000 and provide the organization's total annual budget.
3. Describe the agency's payroll system including internal controls for accuracy and validity. What is the method for documenting employee time? Are time studies utilized? If so, how often are they prepared?
4. Explain your capacity to operate as the "Employer of Record" for paid internships.
5. Describe how the agency will ensure that costs charged to the program are reasonable, allocable, allowable, and necessary.
6. Provide the name, address, contact person, phone number, and email address of the external audit firm. Indicate how long the agency has used this auditing firm and the year of the last RFP (Request for Proposal) done for auditing services.
7. If staff or other costs charged to this budget will be shared between one or more funding sources, please detail the overall cost allocation plan for sharing costs, including the method of allocating shared costs.
8. Attach a copy of the agency's most recent audited financial statements (including Single Audit if applicable), management letter, and federal and state tax returns (or 990/ AG990-IL informational returns). For agencies whose total public contributions (fundraising activities) in a single year are below the State of Illinois threshold for an audit (See Note below), please provide the organization's most recent 2-year comparative financial statements (e.g., statements of financial position, statements of activities, statements of cash flows, and statements of functional expenses – if applicable).

Note: Per (225 ILCS 460/4-Solicitation for Charity Act), the audit threshold for charitable organizations is gross receipts of **\$300,000**, or if the charity used a paid professional fund raiser and raised contributions in excess of **\$25,000**

9. For audits, indicate what action has been taken in regard to the following:
- x Auditor's opinions or recommendations regarding internal controls.
 - x Cost disallowances and any other changes the agency has undertaken in response to audits.
10. Describe leveraged funds that the agency or collaborators will bring to this project. This can include cash contributions, staff effort, space, fee-for-service or other revenue generation and in-kind contributions. In answering, list each source of leveraged resources, the dollar value, and the function of each leveraged resource, for example to spread operating costs or to broaden the scope of services. Note that budgets must back up this information with a breakdown of the funding from each source as it is utilized in the program.
11. Describe respondent's resource development experience and capacity to access various sources of funding in order to operate high-quality programs.

All Required Submittal Documents

Proposals must include the following documents to be considered complete and eligible for review.

Program Proposal

- Respondent Information Form (attached)
- Executive Summary
- Proposal Narrative (not to exceed 15 pages)
- Attachments to the Proposal Response
 - o Foundational Skills Curriculum Outline
 - o Foundational Skills Training Schedule
 - o Letters of Commitment/MOUs with Employers and other Partners
 - o Timeline of Activities

Fiscal Proposal

- Budget Summary and Narrative
- Completed W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
- List of Board Members
- IRS 501(c)(3) Tax Exemption Determination Letter dated within past 3 years (required only if applicable)
- Certificate of Good Standing
- Cost Allocation Plan
- Indirect Cost of Determination Letter (required only if applicable)
- Most Recent Audited Financial Statements
- Fiscal Policies and Procedures

Respondent Information Form

Legal Name Of Applicant Agency		
Number of Years In Business		
FEIN Number		
DUNS Number		
Type of Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Private for Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Minority Business Enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Private Not-for-Profit <input type="checkbox"/> Female Business Enterprise <input type="checkbox"/> Unit of Government <input type="checkbox"/> Disadvantaged Business Enterprise	
Address – Administrative Office	Address	
	City, State ZIP	
	Web Site URL	
Address – Service Location: This is the location where the services described in this application will be provided.	Address	
	City, State ZIP	
Principal of Agency: CEO/Executive Director/President	Name	
	Title	
	Email Address	
	Phone	
Programmatic Contact Person	Name	
	Title	
	Email Address	
	Phone	
Funding Amount Requested	\$	
Target Industries/Sectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Geographic areas(s) or community(ies) to be served		