

NORTHEAST INDIANA WORKS



INDIANA ECONOMIC GROWTH REGION 3 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL ONE-STOP OPERATOR SERVICES

RFP ISSUE DATE: *January 9, 2024*
QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD: *January 10, 2024 – January 19, 2024*
PROPOSAL DUE DATE: *March 1, 2024, 12pm EST*

Northeast Indiana Works
200 E. Main St., Suite 910
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Serving the following counties of northeast Indiana: *Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Grant, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, Whitley*

Northeast Indiana Works and WorkOne Northeast are equal opportunity employers and do not discriminate in the programs and services offered. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The TDD/TTY number is 1-800-743-3333.

INTRODUCTION

Northeast Indiana Works (NEINW) is requesting proposals for qualified entities to serve as the One-Stop Operator in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). This role will require the ability to create collaborative agreements, strategies, and executable implementation amongst WIOA's required partners, including but not limited to: WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Career and Technical Education. NEINW insists on the full integration and coordination of the required and locally identified One-Stop career center partners, with this Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking to engage an entity to serve as the coordinator of such activities.

BACKGROUND

NEINW is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, operating as the workforce board for Economic Growth Region 3 (EGR3) in northeast Indiana, in the counties of Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Grant, Huntington, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, Whitley. The workforce development board is comprised of representatives of business, education, organized labor, community-based organizations, economic development, and other partners, to create a streamlined system that aligns the needs of business, facilitates a thriving workforce, and supports regional economies.

ELIGIBILITY

One-stop operators may be a single entity (public, private, or nonprofit) or a consortium of entities. If the one-stop operator is a consortium of entities, it must include a minimum of three of the one-stop partners described in 20 CFR 678.400 of the WIOA regulations. One-stop operators may operate multiple one-stop centers and there may be multiple one-stop operators in a local area. The types of entities that may be one-stop operators include:

- An institution of higher education;
- A nontraditional public secondary school such as a night school, adult school, or an area career and technical education school;
- A community-based organization, non-profit organization, or workforce intermediary;
- A private for-profit entity;
- A government agency;
- An employment service state agency established under the Wagner-Peyser Act;
- A local Workforce Development Board (WDB), with the approval of the chief elected official and the Governor; or
- Another interested organization or entity which is capable of carrying out the duties of the one-stop operator. Examples may include a local chamber of commerce or other business organization or a labor organization.

Elementary schools and secondary schools, except as listed above, are not eligible as one-stop operators.

CONTRACT TERM

The contract will be a one-year term, renewable for up to three separate one-year terms, for a total of four years, beginning on or before July 1, 2024.

SCOPE OF WORK

NEINW defines the basic role of the One-Stop Operator as an entity that will coordinate the service delivery of participating (both required and locally identified) one-stop partners. This coordination shall, at a minimum, include the following responsibilities:

- Performance metric deliverables.
- One-Stop center workforce management service as well as activities for ongoing continuing quality improvement of deliverable services.
- Establish linkages between all One-Stop partners to review mission and value alignment.
- Facilitate conversations between partners to establish data sharing agreements and performance tracking between partners.
- Convene meetings to build relationships between and among the partners and facilitate conversations to streamline processes and create better efficiencies and effectiveness.
- Support discussions between NEINW and partners regarding infrastructure agreements among partners.
- Develop and assist in execution and maintenance of Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) or other required documents that comply with partner funding requirements, delivery models and metrics to track objectives.
- Work with NEINW staff to conduct meetings with stakeholders to negotiate service delivery commitments.
- Serve as a facilitator between required One-Stop partners and NEINW to operationalize program coordination activities outlined in an MOU.
- Participate in NEINW community or stakeholder strategic meetings related to partners' service delivery needs and design.
- Report quarterly to the NEINW President and CEO on progress and specific milestones negotiated via a service contract.

ONE-STOP OPERATOR DELIVERABLES

The One Stop Operator, in collaboration with NEINW, will:

- Document the objectives, delivery model, service offerings and funding streams of all participating required partners.
- Establish a process that defines how the One-Stop partners will coordinate services to refer customers, share data, and define common metrics to track the success of the efforts of the One-Stop delivery system.
- Establish a process between partners to articulate continuous improvement principles of plan, do, check, and adjust for the joint efforts identified.
- Participate in NEINW partner strategic meetings relating to program delivery needs and design to ensure the operational delivery of identified strategies.

- Produce monthly reports to include actions taken with respect to each of the deliverables highlighting the metrics, accomplishments, challenges. The One-Stop Operator will meet with NEINW's designee monthly to review activities, plan efforts, and coordinate operational activities to partner efforts.

In accordance with WIOA, a One-Stop Operator may not perform the following functions:

- Convene system stakeholders to assist in the development of the Local Plan;
- Prepare and submit Local Plans;
- Be responsible for oversight of itself;
- Manage or significantly participate in the competitive selection process for One-Stop Operators;
- Select or terminate One-Stop Operators, career services, and youth providers;
- Negotiate local performance accountability measures; and
- Develop and submit the budget for activities of the local WDB.

This RFP is not seeking a provider of career services within Northeast Indiana Works career centers. Northeast Indiana Works' service providers have been designated as the entities to manage and provide career services within the regional workforce development area for the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs.

ONE-STOP OPERATOR QUALIFICATIONS

NEINW seeks an entity that meets the following qualifications:

- Has demonstrated experience working within WIOA policy and regulation.
- Has provided similar services in nature and complexity to at least one (1) organization within the last three (3) years.
- Has knowledge of and the ability to work with the diverse demographics within the identified 11 county region of EGR3, specifically addressing economic and social factors.
- Proven mediation or negotiation experience.
- Knowledge of WIOA.
- Registered and in good standing with the Indiana Secretary of State.

TIME AND COMPENSATION

A defined schedule will be established once an entity has been selected through the RFP process. NEINW expects proposing entities to identify anticipated annual costs. A negotiated rate will be agreed upon after selection.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

This RFP is a solicitation and is not a contract offer of any kind. Entities interested in providing services as described in this RFP must submit responses to NEINW in the following manner:

- Questions should be submitted electronically to lrice@neinworks.org. Please type "QUESTIONS: OSO" in the subject line.

- Proposals should be submitted electronically to lrice@neinworks.org by attaching documents in a PDF format compatible with Acrobat PDF. Please type “*PROPSAL: OSO AND BUSINESS NAME*” in the subject line.
- Proposals must be submitted by email no later than 12 p.m. EST on March 1, 2024.
- Any proposal submitted that does not meet the conditions referenced above may be rejected.

PROCUREMENT TIMELINE (Tentative)

Date	Activities/Events
1/9/2024	RFP made available on the Northeast Indiana Works (NEINW) website: www.neinworks.org
1/10/2024 – 1/19/2024	Question and Answer Period: Questions must be submitted via email at: lrice@neinworks.org . Please type “ <i>QUESTIONS: OSO</i> ” in the subject line. Response to all questions will be made available on the NEINW website: www.neinworks.org
3/1/2024	Electronic RFP responses are to be submitted in PDF format version compatible with Acrobat PDF to lrice@neinworks.org . Email containing proposal must be received by 12 p.m. EST. Please type “ <i>PROPOSAL: OSO AND BUSINESS NAME</i> ” in the subject line.
3/4/2024 – 3/22/2024	Responses reviewed and scored; interviews conducted if needed
4/1/2024	Final determination of recommended entity
4/8/2024 – 6/30/2024	Negotiation with the recommended entity
7/1/2024	Contract begins

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

Proposals should adhere to the following format:

All proposals must be completed and signed using the provided documents. The proposal shall be signed by an authorized individual or official of an organization. For proposals from organizations, the proposal shall also provide the following information: name, title, address, and telephone number of individual(s) with authority to negotiate and contractually bind the proposing entity, and the name of the person who may be contacted during the period of proposal evaluation if different from the signatory official. Responses to the RFP should include the following information in this order:

1. Cover letter that includes a statement that the firm understands the scope of the services being requested and their commitment to providing services stated in the proposal.
2. A narrative outlining the proposed approach for One-Stop Operator services.
3. Attachment A – Budget with a 1-to-2-page budget narrative.
4. Attachment B – Assurances and Certifications Form.
5. Additional Information: Please include any additional information considered essential to your response.

Responses should be submitted on 8.5" x 11" paper in a minimum of 12-point font size and single spaced. Responses shall not exceed 20 pages, excluding attachments.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined below:

(30 Points) Proposer identified a clear strategy on how they will sufficiently address expected One-Stop Operator deliverables. Proposer statement regarding how they will accomplish each deliverable includes the following elements:

- Development of required memorandum of understanding that includes objectives, process maps, data sharing, common metrics, and continuous improvement between partners.
- Development of a One-Stop Partner referral plan.
- Proposed process for developing a participant referral system for each One-Stop Partner.
- Facilitation of ongoing One-Stop Partner meetings.
- Identify the process of how partner services will be identified and delivered through the one-stop system.
- Articulated strategy of how the requirements will be accomplished.

(30 Points) Proposer sufficiently addressed their demonstrated knowledge of WIOA, operation of state or federal workforce programs, and one or more required partners. Proposer statements of their knowledge includes the following elements:

- Identifies other projects, assignments or work that involved WIOA.
- Provides information on past involvement of one or more required partner programs.
- Has conveyed an understanding of federal guidance and resources available.
- Proven understanding of WIOA intention to collaborate.
- Articulated comprehension of state and federal metrics.

(20 Points) Proposer has sufficient qualifications to conduct the scope of services and satisfy all requested requirements to fulfill the role of a One-Stop Operator. Proposer statement of their qualifications includes the following elements:

- Identifies examples of facilitation of distinct groups to gain consensus.
- States how the proposer will work with all 11 counties.
- Provides expertise of various demographics in the local operation area.
- Expressed skill in mediation or negotiation.
- A listing of organizations to which similar or like services have been provided within the last three years.

(20 Points) Proposer compensation is reasonable according to their qualifications. Proposer statement on compensation includes the following elements:

- Proposer's cost seems reasonable within the current business environment.
- Proposer's background is clearly identified.
- Profit is separately stated if the proposer is a for-profit entity.
- Proposer is agreeable to potential negotiation.

TOTAL 100

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. A bidder or its principals shall be in good standing, not debarred or suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or otherwise excluded from entering into a financial agreement of federal or state funds.
2. Local, small, minority- and women- owned businesses and labor surplus area firms are encouraged to respond and shall not be discriminated against.
3. NEINW is an equal opportunity employer. All bidders shall certify the same.
4. The bidder certifies and agrees that it will provide and maintain a drug-free workplace.
5. Issuance of the RFP does not commit NEINW to award a contract, to pay costs associated with proposal development or to procure or contract for goods and/or services. Payment for services will be negotiated.
6. NEINW reserves the right to reject any and all proposals if it is in the best interest of NEINW to do so and waive any minor informalities or irregularities in the RFP process. NEINW shall be the sole judge of these irregularities.
7. For the top-ranked bidder(s) selected, references or other points of contact as necessary will be made and any comments will be used to complete the evaluation process. NEINW reserves the right to enter into negotiations with one or more bidders as a result of the RFP evaluation process and enter into a best and final negotiation with one or more of the bidders.
8. NEINW will consider non-responsive any submittal for which critical information is omitted, lacking, or representing a major deviation from the RFP.
9. Proposals received after the due date and time may be considered non-responsive and may not be reviewed or evaluated.

10. Bidders have the right to appeal any action or decision related to this RFP. Appeals will be reviewed and investigated by NEINW. Bidders wishing to make a formal appeal must provide, in writing, their specific rationale for the appeal. All written appeals must be submitted to Edmond O'Neal, NEINW President and CEO, via email to edoneal@NEINWorks.org.
11. Unless specifically requested by NEINW, changes and/or amendments to the originally submitted proposal may not be considered. In addition, NEINW reserves the right to: (1) amend or withdraw this RFP at any time, (2) reject any and all proposals, (3) negotiate with bidders as required, and (4) re-issue this RFP if necessary.
12. By submitting a proposal, the bidder is certifying either no real or apparent conflict of interest exists in carrying out the scope of work described, or where conflict(s) of interest may exist; such potential conflicts will be clearly disclosed in the proposal.
13. All submitted proposals are considered the property of NEINW and are considered confidential.

ATTACHMENT B - ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

The respondent assures and certifies to each of the following items:

1. The bidding organization agrees to comply with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations governing the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, Northeast Indiana Works, and any other applicable laws and regulations.
2. The bidding organization has not been debarred or suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federally funded programs.
3. The bidding organization possesses legal authority to offer the attached proposal.
4. A drug-free workplace will be maintained in accordance with State of Indiana requirements.
5. By submitting a proposal the bidder certifies to his/her knowledge and belief that there is no conflict of interest (real or apparent) inherent in the bid or in delivering the plan of work if Northeast Indiana Works awards a contract. A conflict of interest would arise if any individual involved in the preparation of this RFP, proposal review and rating or award decisions has a financial or other interest in or represents the bidding organization and would be likely to gain financially or personally from the award of a contract. The same would hold true for any member of the individual's family, partner, or an organization employing or about to employ any of the above as a direct result of the successful award of a contract under the RFP. Northeast Indiana Works reserves the right to disqualify a bid should a conflict of interest be discovered during the solicitation process.
6. The bidding organization assures that if awarded a contract by Northeast Indiana Works, it will comply with Regional, State and Federal program and financial monitoring requirements. This means the bidder will make available required information (both program and financial) as is required to satisfy local, state, and federal monitoring expectations.
7. The bidding organization assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. The bidding organization also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR Part 38 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements that Northeast Indiana Works makes to carry out the WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity. This WIOA Title I funded program is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services will be made available upon request for individuals with disabilities. By submitting a bid all bidders are providing an assurance that they will comply with the above nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Printed or Typed Name

Date