



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

## Youth Services Provider

### RFP Timeline

Solicitation Action	Date
Issue RFP	April 20, 2021
Question & Answer Period	April 20 thru April 27, 2021
Letter of Intent	May 3, 2021
Responses to RFP Due	May 14, 2021 – 12Noon EST
Evaluation Process	Begins May 17, 2021
NIWB Board Approval	May 21, 2021
Negotiation Period Begins	May 24, 2021
Contract Begins	On or before July 1, 2021

## INTRODUCTION

The Northern Indiana Workforce Board (NIWB) is seeking proposals from high-quality, innovative, collaborative providers of Youth Services to join our American Job Center, One-Stop partnership. The agency being awarded this contract will meet the provision of Youth Services as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) signed into Law in July 2014, and be in compliance with the Indiana State Plan as developed and delivered by the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC) in the spring of 2020. The NIWB serves individuals in Elkhart, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, and St. Joseph Counties in Northern Indiana and all proposals submitted must demonstrate the ability to provide high-quality, consistent services across all five counties. The focus of the proposal should include equal opportunity and access of programs across all demographics, urban and rural, ensuring availability of high-performing programs. The NIWB is committed to collaborative engagement between workforce partners in an effort to develop a truly skilled, certified workforce, bringing individuals out of poverty, into the pathway of high-wage, high-demand, life-altering chances. Programs must be focused on At-Risk Youth ages 14-24, showing a continuum of service from intake to achievement of workforce goals developed in partnership with the participant and a Youth Service Career Advisor, including the availability of the fourteen (14) WIOA Youth Program Elements:

1. Tutoring, study skills training and drop-out prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school services or drop-out recovery services
3. Paid and unpaid work experience, including summer employment, job opportunities during the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, access to State Earn and Learn (SEAL) programs, internships, job-shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities
4. Occupational skills training
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities
6. Leadership development opportunities
7. Supportive Services
8. Adult mentoring
9. Comprehensive guidance and counseling
10. Financial literacy education
11. Entrepreneurial skills training
12. Services that provide labor market and employment information
13. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary and training
14. Follow up services for not less than twelve (12) months after the completion of participation.

While the task is great, the successful bidder will understand and develop staff capacity to ensure that the types and duration of services provided may vary based on the needs of the individual in a focused plan, leading to better paying jobs and the opportunity for continuous development of a strategic life-long learning plan. In order to maximize funding and opportunities for youth in the region, the successful bidder must be able to demonstrate an ability to develop and maintain strong partnerships with area high schools, Career Tech Ed programs, the Youth Services Bureau, Goodwill services, Ivy Tech Community College, Horizon Educational Alliance, Indiana INTERNet programs, the Juvenile Justice programs, the Department of Corrections, InSource, Connexus, South Bend Group Violence Intervention program and other agencies with whom partnering adds extreme value and capacity for expanded, more robust services and opportunities for enrichment.

The NIWB is requesting proposals from qualified service provider agencies and contractors with expertise in providing innovative Youth Services designed to meet the needs of at-risk populations, both urban and rural, with an intense focus on labor market information and new, emerging employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

## KEY INFORMATION

- A Letter of Intent should be sent by email to Barbara White by May 3, 2021.

Barbara White – [bwhite@gotoworkone.com](mailto:bwhite@gotoworkone.com)

- Questions concerning this proposal must be submitted in writing by email to:

Barbara White – [bwhite@gotoworkone.com](mailto:bwhite@gotoworkone.com)

- Deadline for submitting questions concerning the RFP is:
  - 5:00 p.m., April 27, 2021
  - Please reference YOUTH SERVICES PROVIDER RFP in the subject line of the email.
  - Answers to all questions will be delivered through an FAQ-style response to all interested bidders by May 5, 2021.
- All responses to this RFP must be submitted electronically no later than **12 NOON EST, May 14, 2021** to:

### **Youth Services Provider RFP**

**Attention: Barbara White  
Northern Indiana Workforce Board  
Assistant to the Board**

[bwhite@gotoworkone.com](mailto:bwhite@gotoworkone.com)

*(Any response, or portion thereof, received after the submittal deadline will be declared unresponsive and will not be considered.)*

**ANTICIPATED CONTRACT DATE:** On or before, **July 1, 2021**

*(This is a tentative date and is subject to the identification and selection of a qualified respondent.)*

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Northern Indiana Workforce Board (NIWB) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The NIWB is appointed and designated by the Economic Growth Region 2 (EGR2) Chief of Local Elected Officials to act as the Workforce Development Board under the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. The NIWB has requested and received certification as the Local Workforce Development Board by the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC). The NIWB of EGR2 is comprised of representatives of Business, Education, Labor Organizations, Community-based Organizations, Economic Development Organizations, One-Stop Partners, and other organizations as determined by WIOA to serve five (5) counties: Elkhart, Fulton, Kosciusko, Marshall, and St. Joseph.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICE**

The NIWB is seeking an organization or contractor with the expertise and established track record for providing services as required by WIOA legislation for a Youth Service Provider. These services must be full-scope, not in part, as required to serve In-School and Out-of-School Youth, providing Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) services where contracted within the region, and locating and building Work-Based Learning opportunities for Youth 14-24 in both urban and rural settings.

For the purposes of this RFP, it should be noted that the NIWB operates JAG programs across the region. While the number of these programs grew to a level of eighteen (18) programs, the use of these programs in schools since the implementation of Indiana's Grad Pathways programs to ensure the employability of students graduating from Indiana high schools, Career and Tech Education programs specifically, has reduced the number programs in the EGR2 secondary schools. As these needs have shifted, it has become important to focus In-School Youth Services to a county-based, referral-type program, working closely with area community-based organizations, high school counselors, and other agencies focusing on at-risk youth. This increases the need for mobility and the ability to work virtually to provide services and workshop opportunities to a broader audience. Innovation and accountability will be key in determining the organization chosen to serve as the Youth Service Provider. Agencies must show a robust availability of additional services or programs to increase opportunities and expand capacity in our region. There must be the willingness and ability to partner with local agencies and other government agencies/services to strengthen the efficacy of our regional One-Stop programs. Dual enrollments in Youth programs within the region are expected.

The NIWB provides the JAG model of services, In-School services based on the WIOA guidelines, and a robust Out-of-School Youth Program focusing on work-based learning opportunities and financial literacy. The work-based learning opportunities are based in high-wage, high-demand occupations chosen by the youth participants after intensive assessment and career pathway development with work-ready focus. Through the assistance of Burning Glass and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (IN DWD) labor market information, the NIWB in partnership with the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership have determined the key high-wage, high-demand career sectors for EGR2.

All work within EGR2 has a strong employer engagement component requiring a Youth-focused Business Services Representative and a Youth Coordinator. These two roles are expected to be part of the One-Stop (WorkOne) Business Services Team. This ensures that all opportunities for Youth 14-24 (meeting all WIOA eligibility criteria) to explore employment, post-secondary, and/or military opportunities are available.

It should also be noted that the work of the Youth Services Provider is coordinated through the NIWB VP of Operations. The work must meet the expectations of the NIWB with a strong focus on the work of the future. There is specific guidance which is provided by the NIWB and its Youth Committee. Part of these expectations that the following WIOA Negotiated Outcomes must be met:

- Earn a high school diploma or the high school equivalency certificate
- Enter post-secondary, military, or employment
- Complete post-secondary successfully
- Retain employment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after program exit
- Retain employment in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after program exit
- Meet the median Youth income requirement
- Meet the Measureable Skills Gains outcome

In order to meet the outcomes as outlined by the WIOA legislation, the above mentioned fourteen (14) program elements (found in DOL TEGL 21-16) must be included in the proposal for it to be considered. Along with these elements, the following job duties for the contracted or Service Provider staff must be included with the service provision described as well:

- ✓ Eligibility determination for Youth participants
- ✓ Outreach, intake, and orientation of Youth
- ✓ Initial assessment of skills and supportive service needs
- ✓ Labor exchange services (job search and placement services, career counseling) and services to employers (how to coordinate a youth employment/learning experience, or other relevant services to assist the employer in their work with youth)
- ✓ Referrals and coordination with other programs and agencies
- ✓ Provision of labor market information
- ✓ Provision of performance and cost information of training providers
- ✓ Provision of performance information on local accountability measures
- ✓ Provision of information on the availability and referral to support services, SNAP, and TANF
- ✓ Provision of assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid for programs not funded by WIOA
- ✓ Provision of services with Youth on obtaining and retaining employment through the use of such things as:
  - Comprehensive assessment
  - Individual Employment Plans (IEP's)
  - Individual Education Plans
    - Pre-Employment Transition Services
    - Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation Services
  - Group and individual career coaching
  - Career Planning
  - Transition out of Foster Care
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars Coaching
  - Short-term, pre-vocational services

- Work-based learning opportunities
  - Job shadowing
  - Work Experience
  - SEAL program
- Employment preparation
- Financial Literacy
- Entrepreneurial opportunities and realities
  - Recognizing the growth opportunities
  - Preparing for the financial requirements
  - Tax planning
- Out of area job search and planning
- ✓ Provision of follow up activities

## **CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

Must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Has provided services similar in nature and complexity for at least two (2) consecutive years
- Has contracted with at least one (1) organization similar in scope and size of this contract within the past three (3) years
- Has a Certificate of Incorporation to conduct business in this capacity in the State of Indiana
- Has had a clean audit for the past three (3) years
- Can produce a clean monitoring track record
- Can demonstrate innovative programs
- Can demonstrate effective measures of success

## **GENERAL CONDITIONS**

### **A. RESPONSE DUE DATE AND TIME**

Each agency submitting a proposal is required to submit their response to this RFP no later than 12 NOON EST on May 14, 2021. The delivery of the response is solely and strictly the responsibility of the respondent. Responses received after 12 NOON EST on May 14, 2021 will be considered unresponsive.

Only a full, complete responsive RFP will be considered. All conditions set forth in this RFP must be followed to be considered fully responsive. All responses must be manually and duly signed by an authorized corporate officer, principal, or partner (as applicable).

## B. RESPONSE CONTENT

- a. **Letter of Intent** - Should your firm be interested in providing Youth services as described in this RFP, please prepare a Letter of Intent by May 3, 2021 by email to Barbara White – [bwhite@gotoworkone.com](mailto:bwhite@gotoworkone.com). Please include EGR2 Youth RFP 2021 Letter of Intent in the subject line of your email.
- b. **Cover Letter** – Must include a statement that your firm understands the scope of services sought and a statement guaranteeing the price for the term of the contract. This must be signed by an individual with the authority to bind the firm to the response submitted.
- c. **Table of Contents** -
- d. **Scope of Services** – In this section, the respondent should explain the proposed approach to Youth Service provision.
- e. **Appendices:**
  - i. Appendix A – Organization information
  - ii. Appendix B – Qualification and Requirements
  - iii. Appendix C – References
- f. **Budget Information** – Provide a total cost for the delivery of the services as outlined and described in the Scope of Service section of this RFP as well budget detail by line item.
- g. **Other Information** – Please include any additional information not already requested that your firm considers essential to your response. If there is no additional information to include, state “There is no additional information our firm wishes to present.”

## C. RFP TIMELINE

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Evaluation Process	Beings May 17, 2021
NIWB Board Approval	May 21, 2021
Negotiation Period Begins	May 24, 2021
Contract Begins	On or around July 1, 2021
Length of Contract	Two years with ability to annually extend up to 3 additional years, based on performance, business needs, and funding availability.

## D. ELIGIBLE RESPONDENTS

WIOA clearly defines the types of entities that may be the Youth Services Provider. These include:

- a. An institution of higher education
- b. A traditional public secondary school
- c. A non-traditional secondary school, such as night school, adult school, or an area career and technical education school
- d. A community-based organization, non-profit organization, or workforce intermediary

- e. A private for-profit entity, or
- f. Another interested organization or entity, which is capable of carrying out the duties of a Youth Services Provider.

\*Minority and Women-owned and operated businesses are encouraged to submit a response.

Responses will not be reviewed if:

1. The respondent has been disbarred, suspended or otherwise determined to be ineligible to receive federal funds by an action of any governmental agency;
2. The respondent's previous contract(s) with the NIWB have been terminated for cause; or
3. The respondent has not complied with an official order to repay disallowed costs incurred during its conduct of programs or services while working with another agency.

## **E. RESPONSE FORMAT**

Each response should be prepared simply and succinctly, providing a clear and concise presentation of the information requested in the RFP in the order requested. As the submission is electronic only, there is no need for an elaborate response in a hard-copy version. Please ensure that any and all graphics used in the presentation should be related to your agency's areas of expertise, indicating opportunity for Youth being served.

The NIWB will not return responses to your agency. Bidding organizations should note that under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the contents of your proposal or other information submitted to the NIWB are subject to public release of upon request – except those items specifically exempt from disclosure. The bidder shall mark as “proprietary” those parts of the proposal that it deems proprietary. However, the bidder is alerted that this marking is advisory only and not binding on the NIWB. If there is a request for the public under FOIA to inspect any part of the proposal so marked, the NIWB will advise the bidder and request further justification in support of the “proprietary” marking. If the NIWB determines after receipt of justification, that the material is releasable, the bidder will be notified immediately. Under no circumstances will a proposal or any part of a proposal be released prior to the contract award decision. Each firm submitting a response to this RFP agrees that the preparation of all materials and all presentations are at the respondent's sole cost and expense, and the NIWB shall not, under any circumstances, be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the respondent.

The respondent should follow the instructions in this RFP in order to be considered fully responsive. Submissions should be concise and easily understood.

Responses should not exceed 15 pages in length, excluding required appendices. The font size should not exceed 12-point font size and single-spaced.

Do not respond to any questions in this RFP by referencing material presented elsewhere. The response provided immediately after the restatement of the question shall be considered complete and stands on its own merits. A response of “will comply” “see above” or similar statement shall be

considered unresponsive. Failure to respond to any section of this RFP may result in disqualification of the proposal.

**SUBMISSIONS MUST INCLUDE:**

\*Original responses delivered electronically to:

Youth Services Provider  
Barbara White, Assistant to the Board  
Northern Indiana Workforce Board (NIWB)  
[bwhite@gotoworkone.com](mailto:bwhite@gotoworkone.com)

**F. IMPROPER BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS/CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

In connection with this RFP, each respondent shall ensure that no improper, unethical, or illegal relationships or conflicts of interest exist between or among the respondent, the NIWB, and any other parties to this RFP. The respondent is responsible for disclosing at the point of response submission any such relationships. The NIWB reserves the right to determine the materiality of such relationships, when discovered or disclosed, whether intended or not, and to decide whether or not respondent disqualification and/or cancellation of contract shall be at no fault or liability whatsoever to the NIWB.

**G. QUESTIONS**

All questions regarding this RFP document must be submitted electronically and received by the NIWB by the due date shown under "RFP Timeline". Barbara White ([bwhite@gotoworkone.com](mailto:bwhite@gotoworkone.com)) is the point of contact for any questions or concerns regarding this RFP. The NIWB will make a good-faith effort to prepare a written response to each question or request for clarification to all respondents in an FAQ-style document. This will happen shortly after the question deadline.

**CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

This RFP and the evaluation and selection process shall in no way be deemed to create a binding contract or agreement of any kind between the NIWB and any respondent. All legal rights and obligations between the successful respondent, if any, and the NIWB will come into existence only when a contract is fully executed by both parties. The legal rights and obligations of each party shall at that time be only those rights and obligations which are set forth in the contract and any other document specifically referenced in that contract. The term of this contract shall be from a period commencing on or around July 1, 2021 and terminating June 30, 2023 with an option to extend yearly for up to three (3) additional years based on performance, business needs, and funding availability.

Invoices must be submitted on a monthly basis by the 10th of the month following the month of service. No third party contracts or subcontracts will be allowed unless specifically first approved in advance and in writing by the NIWB.

## EVALUATION AND SELECTION

The evaluation of each response to this RFP will be based on the proposer's overall expertise and track record in delivering the services requested in this RFP and at the proposed price. (See breakdown of selection criteria below.) The selection committee will review and score each proposal deemed responsive, place the responses in rank order, and present the results along with their recommendation to the Executive Board of the NIWB for review. A final selection will be made by the Board or Executive Board, contingent upon successful contract negotiations. Upon selection of the most qualified respondent, the NIWB staff will begin negotiations in order to secure a contract at a level of compensation that the NIWB determines fair, competitive, and reasonable. Should the NIWB be unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with the respondent considered to be most qualified at a price the NIWB determines to be fair, competitive, and reasonable, negotiations with that respondent will be formally terminated. The NIWB shall then undertake negotiations with the next most qualified respondent, re-solicit for the services, or postpone/cancel the RFP as determined by the NIWB Chair. Final award of a contract will be contingent upon:

- Identification of a respondent qualified and capable of providing the services sought by the NIWB in this RFP;
- Successful negotiation of a contract at a price the NIWB determines to be fair, competitive and reasonable; and,
- Availability of sufficient funding.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

CRITERIA WEIGHT FACTOR REQUIREMENTS	
Received by Due Date and On Time	MANDATORY
Formatted as Required	5
All Questions Answered	5
Experience of Contractor	10
Meets Vision of the NIWB	40
Reasonable Cost Outlined in Budget	35
Minority, Small Business, Women-owned	5
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>100</b>

## **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

From the date and time of selection/notice of intent to award, any contractor has 72 hours (3 business days) in which to file a written appeal/protest with:

Mark King, Board Chair

Northern Indiana Workforce Board  
851 Marietta Street  
South Bend, IN 46383

The decision of the NIWB is final.

## **CONDITIONS OF THIS RFP – RESERVED RIGHTS**

The issuance of this RFP constitutes only an invitation to present a response. All information provided by the NIWB in this RFP is offered in good faith; the NIWB makes no certification that any item is without error. The NIWB is not responsible or liable for any use of the information or for any claims attempted to be asserted therefrom. The rights reserved by the NIWB, shall be exercised in its sole and absolute discretion and there shall be no fault, cost or liability whatsoever to the NIWB, including, without limitation, the right to:

- Supplement, amend or otherwise modify or cancel any provisions set forth in this solicitation at any time.
- Accept or reject any or all responses, to re-advertise this RFP, to postpone or cancel this process, and to change or modify the time line at any time.
- Disqualify any respondent that submits an incomplete or inadequate response or is not responsive to the requirements of this RFP.
- Disqualify any respondent who demonstrates less than full understanding of this RFP in its entirety.
- Waive any defect, technicality, or irregularity in any response received;
- Require additional information and/or oral presentation from one or more respondents to supplement or to clarify the response submitted.
- Determine whether the respondent's written or oral representations are true, accurate and complete.
- Determine whether the respondent has the necessary experience, including seeking and evaluating independent information on any respondent.
- Consider any information submitted that is not requested by the NIWB in a response as supplemental information and not subject to evaluation by the proposal review team or the NIWB.
- Accept or reject, in part or entirely, the contractor's pricing. The NIWB prohibits the changing of pricing and/or revenue responses after the RFP closing date and time except through the negotiation process.

- End contract negotiations if acceptable progress, as determined by the NIWB Chair, is not being made within a reasonable time frame.
- Change specifications and modify contracts as necessary to: (a) facilitate compliance with the legislation, regulations, and policy directives, and (b) to manage funding.
- Request additional services. If the respondent is to be engaged to perform any additional services, the scope and fee will be negotiated in a separate contract to be awarded as a result of this solicitation.
- Such contracts, including provisions for additional fees, are valid only if approved in writing by both the respondent and the NIWB.

**Appendix A – Organization  
Information**

**Youth Services Provider**

Company Name:			
Mailing Address:			
City:	State:	Zip:	
Physical Location:			
City:	State:	Zip:	
Name of Company Owner:			
Contact Person:		Title:	
Phone:	Ext:	Fax:	
Email:		Web Address:	
Date Firm was Established:	Years in Business:	Total # Full-Time Employees at Location:	
Legal Structure of Business:	Sole Proprietor Non-Profit	Partnership Other:	Corporation
Employers Federal ID #:		Unemployment Comp ID #:	
Dunn and Bradstreet #:		Primary NAICS and/or (SIC) Code:	
Is your company current on all State of Indiana tax obligations?		Yes No	
Is your company licensed in the State of Indiana?		Yes No	
Minority or women owned and operated business?			
Small business?			
Description of your business, products, and/or service(s): (1 Page Limit)			

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**Authorized Signature:** Execution hereof is certification that the undersigned has read and understands the terms and conditions of the RFP, and that the above signed principal is fully bound and committed.

## Appendix B

### Youth Services Provider

Respondent must meet all of the minimum qualifications outlined below. Please answer each question and initial by your answer.

1. Has your company provided services similar in nature and complexity as those requested in this RFP for at least two years?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_

2. Has your company contracted to provide services similar in nature and complexity as those requested in this RFP with at least one organization within the past three years?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_

3. Does your company or one of your collaborative partners have subsidiaries, a parent organization, or other affiliates?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_ If yes, provide a full explanation.

4. Is your company or one of your collaborative partners presently debarred or suspended or otherwise determined to be ineligible to receive funds by a government agency?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_ If yes, provide a full explanation.

5. Has your company had a previous contract(s) with the NIWB terminated for cause?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_ If yes, provide a full explanation.

6. Has your company complied with all official orders to repay disallowed costs incurred during your company's delivery of programs or services?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_ If no, provide a full explanation.

7. Does your company's name appear on any convicted contractor list?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_ If yes, provide a full explanation.

8. Has your company had a contract terminated for default in the last five years?  
Termination for default is defined as notice to stop performance, delivered to respondent due to respondent's non-performance or poor performance and the issue of performance was either not litigated due to inaction on the part of respondent; or litigated and determined that respondent was in default.

Yes  No Initial: \_\_If yes, provide a full explanation.

9. Has your company or any of your collaborative partners declared bankruptcy and/or had any assets attached by any court in the last three (3) years?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_If yes, provide a full explanation.

10. Is your company financially solvent?

Yes  No Initial: \_\_If no, provide a full explanation.

## **Appendix C – Company References**

Respondent must include a list of references that can speak to the respondent's prior experience and past performance in delivering similar services. Reference names and contact information should be included. The NIWB reserves the right to contact any person(s) or organization(s) that is familiar with the work of the respondent to document the qualifications and successful experiences of respondent, as well as to solicit character references.