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| StateSeal.JPG | **RFS-24-77904**  **Pre-Employment Transition Services Required Activities**  **Attachment E** | |
| **Respondent:** | | ADEC INC |
| **Instructions:**  Request for Service RFS-24-77904 is a solicitation by the State of Indiana in which organizations are invited to compete for contract amongst other respondents in a formal evaluation process. Please be aware that the evaluation of your organization’s proposal will be completed by a team of State of Indiana employees and your organization’s score will be reflective of that evaluation. The evaluation of a proposal can only be based upon the information provided by the Respondent in its proposal submission. Therefore, a competitive proposal will thoroughly answer the questions listed. The Respondent is expected to provide the complete details of its proposed operations, processes, and staffing for the scope of work detailed in the RFS document and supplemental attachments.  Please review the requirements in the RFS carefully. Please describe your relevant experience and explain how you propose to perform the work. For all areas in which subcontractors will be performing a portion of the work, clearly describe their roles and responsibilities, related qualifications, and experience, and how you will maintain oversight of the subcontractors’ activities.  Please use the yellow shaded fields to indicate your answers to the following questions. The yellow fields will automatically expand to accommodate content. Every attempt should be made to preserve the original format of this form. **A completed Technical Proposal is a requirement for proposal submission. Failure to complete and submit this form may impact your proposal’s responsiveness.** Diagrams, certificates, graphics, and other exhibits should be referenced within the relevant answer field and included as legible attachments. | | |

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| **1** | **Proposed Solution and Features**  Provide an overview of how the proposed strategies meet the requirements for Pre-ETS as outlined in the scope of work. Describe in detail the specific strategies for developing and carrying out each of the five Pre-ETS activities described in Section III. Summary Scope of Work, to students with disabilities, as aligned with WIOA required activities, for both individuals and/or in group settings. As applicable, describe how the proposed strategies enhance or expand upon existing strategies that have been successful in the provision of services that align with Pre-ETS to students with disabilities or other student populations. Identify the specific counties and schools respondent intends to serve.  Additionally, please provide a detailed description of your work approach, including the following:   * + How would you organize this project in order to be able to manage the workload?   + Provide a high-level project plan, based on the information provided in this RFI.   + Provide preferred list of counties and school systems you intend to serve. As described in Section III. Summary Scope of Work, respondents may also opt to provide a secondary list of alternate counties and schools you would consider serving.   + Describe how you would evaluate the effectiveness of services provided.   + Provide a brief description or sample of the curriculum you propose to utilize for each of the required activities, as well as incorporation of best practices or resources into service delivery, such as the Lifecourse framework. |
| **Overview**  ADEC has long delivered services that support the transition of students with disabilities from high school to competitive integrated employment. We recognize the need for increased support for transition services through the inclusion of Pre-ETS. ADEC proposes to provide high quality Pre-ETS services that satisfy the State’s need for the ongoing provision and expansion of Pre-ETS through arranging for and delivering required activities to students with disabilities, as aligned with WIOA required activities.  We intend on leveraging and incorporating best practices to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. This will include collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to local educational agencies, post-secondary educational institutions, community programs, WorkOne centers, community employers, local public agencies, and more, many in which we already have established relationships.  Additionally, all services are person-centered so that we can best serve everyone. Our agency utilizes Charting the LifeCourse Framework in all aspects of service provision to further drive transformational change and improve outcomes for all participants. Our mission statement and values directly align with LifeCourse’s Framework to “help individuals and families of all abilities and all ages develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live.”  The specific strategies for each of the Pre-ETS activities are described in detail below and will be done both individually and/or in group settings:  **Job Exploration Counseling**: This will be a multifaceted approach that’s engaging, informative and accessible. By combining a variety of engaging activities, leveraging technology, and focusing on accessibility, this will effectively guide students in exploring and understanding diverse career paths despite their disabilities. We will utilize a thoughtful and adaptive approach in guiding students toward career paths that align with their strengths, interests, and aspirations. Utilization of LifeCourse will be pivotal in this process.   * Development and offering interactive workshops and online resources to explore various career options:   + Professionals from various fields will be included to share their career journeys, highlighting the diversity of career options available.   + We will utilize hands-on activities that simulate aspects of different professions.   + Success stories and real-world examples to illustrate diverse career opportunities will be presented in various ways, including career panel discussions comprised of individuals with disabilities who have successful careers. This will provide valuable insights and inspiration to the students.   + We will incorporate group activities and discussions where students can share their interests, learn from each other, and brainstorm potential career paths.   + We will curate a collection of articles, videos, and podcasts showcasing diverse careers and success stories, ensuring these resources are accessible and inclusive. * Conduct personality and interest assessments and inventories to guide students toward suitable career paths:   + We will integrate online platforms that offer career assessment tests, matching individuals’ interests, and skills with potential career paths.   + Utilization of recognized and validated assessment tools, designed for individuals with disabilities (e.g. Conover) will ensure that the assessment tools accommodate various cognitive and physical abilities. We will choose tools that offer a range of formats such as visual, auditory, or tactile to accommodate different learning styles.   + One-on-one sessions will be conducted to personalize the assessment process, allowing students to express themselves comfortably and ensuring their specific needs are addressed.   + Results of any assessments will be interpreted in a way that’s clear and actionable for the student.   + Parents, educators, and relevant support networks will be engaged to gather insights and provide a holistic understanding of the student’s interests and capabilities. * Offer individualized counseling sessions to map out potential career trajectories:   + This includes reviewing the results of personality and interest assessments, academic strengths, challenges, and any career-related experiences the student might have had.   + We will be able to establish trust and rapport with the student by creating a safe and supportive environment where the student feels comfortable discussing their aspirations, concerns, and goals. Open communication will be encouraged, and active listening utilized to understand their unique needs and desires.   + Facilitation of discussions to help the student articulate their short-term and long-term careers that encourage setting realistic and achievable objectives.   + Guidance will be customized based on each student’s abilities, preferences, and any accommodations they might require. We can address potential challenges and develop strategies to overcome them.   + Identification of different pathways, such as vocational training, college education, or direct entry into the workforce will occur and it will include identify and discussing available support services, accommodations, and resources in educational institutions or workplaces for individuals with disabilities.   + Creation of a realistic action plan that includes steps to achieve their career goals, such as acquiring relevant skills, gaining experience, or seeking internships will occur. This will include referrals to VR as appropriate.   + There will be collaboration with stakeholders and involving parents, educators, and relevant professionals to ensure a comprehensive approach.   **Work-Based Learning Experiences:** These experiences are instrumental in providing practical exposure and skill development for students with disabilities. By leveraging diverse learning opportunities, tailored experiences, and fostering inclusive workplace cultures, these work-based learning initiatives can significantly benefit students in their transition to the workforce. These experiences will assist allow students to apply classroom knowledge and gain a greater understanding of the soft skills important to success in the workplace. This can include in-school and after-school opportunities to ensure accommodation for all student participants and their scheduling needs.   * Collaborate with local businesses for internships, job shadowing, or apprenticeships:   + We will forge and expand existing partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and industry professionals to offer a diverse range of work-based learning opportunities.   + We will identify disability-friendly employers who are committed to providing inclusive environments.   + Educational workshops for local employers will be offered to assist with understanding of the program and overall benefits of being an inclusive workplace.   + Career fairs and networking events will be organized where students can interact with professionals, explore different industries, and learn about job opportunities. * Customize experiences based on students' interests and skills:   + Experiences will be customized based on students’ interests, skills, and career goals, ensuring a match between the student and the work environment.   + There will be flexibility in placements to accommodate different abilities and preferences. * Provide mentorship programs to facilitate learning in workplace environments:   + There will be opportunities for students to shadow professionals in their chosen field, observing daily tasks and responsibilities and engagement will be encouraged through Q&A sessions and interactions with employees to gain insights into an industry.   + Internships will allow students to gain hands-on experience in specific industries and professions.   + Providing mentorship and guidance during these experiences ensures a supportive learning environment.   + We will advocate for inclusive workplace practices and sensitize employers and coworkers to create supportive environments for individuals with disabilities. * Offer workshops to develop workplace skills:   + Skill development workshops will be offered that focus on skills such as time management, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.   + Training sessions specifically addressing accommodation or adaptations needed in the workplace will be offered.   **Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Postsecondary Education:** This will involve guiding students through the process of transitioning from high school to various educational paths beyond, including colleges, vocational schools, or specialized training programs. By addressing concerns, providing information, and supporting students and their families in navigating the complexities of postsecondary education, we will help students make informed decisions and successfully transition to higher education settings aligned with their goals and needs.   * Conduct seminars on college readiness, admissions, and financial aid opportunities:   + Workshops will be conducted that focus on college readiness skills, including time management, study skills, self-advocacy, and navigating campus resources.   + Concerns and fears that students/families may have about transitioning to a postsecondary environment will be addressed.   + We will assist students in understanding the financial aid process, including grants, scholarships, and loans available for students with disabilities.   + Guidance on completing applications and exploring specific disability-related scholarships or grants will be provided to students and their families. * Offer one-on-one counseling for students exploring postsecondary education:   + Comprehensive information about various postsecondary options will be provided so that students can understand their options and align their educational choices with their desired career paths, emphasizing programs or majors that support their career aspirations.   + This includes discussions on the pros and cons of different paths based on the student’s interests, abilities, and career goals. * Provide information about accommodations and support services available in colleges:   + Students will be educated about disability resource centers, accommodations, and assistive technology use.   + We will guide students in understanding their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and how to request accommodations.   + Discussions regarding the transition from IEPs and 504 plans in high school to accommodations and support plans in postsecondary education settings will occur. This will include the differences between rights and responsibilities between high school and college regarding accommodations.   + Students will learn about the educational support services available through various agencies, including VR.   **Workplace Readiness Training:** This is crucial for equipping students with disabilities with the essential skills and knowledge necessary to excel in professional environments. By offering a well-rounded curriculum, interactive workshops, and personalized support, workplace readiness training can significantly enhance the preparedness of students for success.   * Develop a curriculum covering a range of workplace skills to be utilized individually and as groups:   + Skills covered will include job search skills such as resume writing and cover letter preparation, and interview techniques.   + Students will receive support in understanding what job search looks like, how to utilize job search tools, the purpose of applications, and how to identify job openings.   + We will assist students with understanding workplace diversity and inclusion.   + Workplace expectations regarding appropriate dress and hygiene will be addressed, as well as workplace norms, expectations, and appropriate behavior in diverse work settings.   + This will include educating students about workplace ethics, confidentiality, and the importance of maintaining professionalism. * Organize mock interviews and simulation exercises to prepare students for real-world scenarios:   + Mock interviews with professionals or HR representatives will be utilized to provide students with realistic interview experiences.   + Staff will offer the students constructive feedback to enhance their interview performance. * Offer workshops on workplace readiness:   + Interactive workshops with hands-on activities and role-playing exercises simulating workplace scenarios will be conducted.   + Professional communication and etiquette, conflict resolution and problem-solving, as well as time management and organizational skills will be taught.   + There will be practical sessions focused on drafting resumes, crafting cover letters, and refining interview skills.   + The importance of soft skills such as teamwork, adaptability, critical thinking, and leadership will be emphasized.   + We will facilitate team-building exercises and collaborative projects to foster these skills. * Provide individualized support:   + One-on-one sessions to address specific concerns or challenges faced by students in a workplace context will be utilized.   + We will tailor training sessions to accommodate different learning styles and abilities.   + Students will learn about strategies for managing their disability in the workplace.   **Self-Advocacy Training:** This is vital for empowering students to effectively communicate their needs, rights, and preferences in academic settings and the workforce. By focusing on communication, confidence-building, problem-solving, and practical scenarios, self-advocacy training equips students with the tools and skills necessary to advocate for themselves effectively in academic and professional settings. These skills are further developed when students are provided with experiences to develop knowledge of their self and rights and responsibilities, as well as communication and leadership skills.   * Conduct sessions to empower students to advocate for themselves in academic and workplace settings:   + We will focus on developing assertive and effective communication skills including:     - Articulating needs and accommodations clearly and confidently     - Advocating for oneself in various situations, such as requesting accommodations or addressing concerns with supervisors or educators     - Active listening and negotiation skills.   + Students will work with staff to develop personalized action plans for advocating in specific situations. * Provide resources and guidance on understanding rights and accommodations under ADA:   + Students will be educated about their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and other relevant laws protecting individuals with disabilities.   + Staff will explain the process of requesting and accessing accommodations in educational and workplace settings. * Encourage self-reflection and confidence-building activities:   + Workshops and activities aimed at boosting self-confidence and self-esteem will be offered.   + We will encourage students to do self-reflection and recognition of strengths and capabilities.   + Role-playing exercised or real-life scenarios will be utilized to simulate advocacy situations students might encounter.   + Students will be encouraged to practice advocating for themselves in a safe and supportive environment. * Assist students and families with identifying resources:   + We will introduce students and their families to support networks, disability services, and advocacy organizations that can provide guidance and resources.   + We will foster connections with mentors or peers who have experience in successful self-advocacy.   Additionally, work-based learning stipends will be made available to Pre-ETS students on a case-by-case basis. The ability to offer this to students will increase interest and student/family investment in the program. These stipends will meet all requirements including being of equal or greater value than the federal minimum wage requirement and the prevailing wage for a person working the same job or completing similar tasks or the established intern rate or structure that is paid to all interns of a specific business if it is at or above the federal minimum wage.  **Work Approach and Project Organization:** Structuring the work approach for such a comprehensive program involves several key elements to ensure effective organization, management, and successful implementation. By structuring the project around team collaboration, stakeholder engagement, phased implementation, continuous improvement, resource management, and documentation, the Pre-ETs project can be executed efficiently and with a higher likelihood of achieving its goals.  Organization and project management includes establishing a dedicated team with specific roles. We will assemble a diverse team including the VR Youth Counselor, educators, administrators, and specialists experienced in working with students with disabilities. Specific roles and responsibilities will be identified to ensure clarity in tasks and accountability. We will implement a robust project management system to track progress, tasks, timelines, and resource allocation. Regular meetings for progress updates and adjustments to the project plan will be held. Schools, parents, community organizations, and local businesses will be engaged to foster collaboration and support. Clear communication channels to keep stakeholders informed about program developments will be implemented.  The project plan will be carried out in a phased approach for systematic execution.  **Phase 1: Research and planning:** This phase includes conducting thorough research on effective Pre-ETS strategies, curriculum development, and partnerships with schools and businesses.  **Phase 2: Partner outreach and program establishment:** During this phase we will forge partnerships with schools, businesses, and support organizations, outlining mutual goals and responsibilities.  **Phase 3: Program implementation and monitoring:** The program will be executed by beginning activities, workshops, counseling, and training to students following a predefined schedule and curriculum.  **Phase 4: Evaluation and feedback collection:** An assessment framework to evaluate program effectiveness, gather feedback from participants, educators, and employers will be implemented. We will foster a culture of continuous improvement by collecting and analyzing feedback and data throughout the project. This feedback will be used to adapt and enhance program elements for better outcomes.  During the project, we will allocate resources effectively, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in all program aspects. This includes securing the necessary funding, materials, and technology required for workshops, training sessions, and assessments. We will maintain detailed documentation of program activities, participant progress, and outcomes for internal records and reporting purposes.  **Preferred Counties and Schools:**  Based on demographics and existing networks, we propose to provide services in both Elkhart and St. Joseph counties. The preferred schools include any high school in the following public and charter school districts:   * Penn High School including Young Adult Programming * Mishawaka High School including Young Adult Programming * South Bend Community School Corporation:   + Adams High School   + Riley High School   + Washington High School   + Studebaker School Young Adult Program * Elkhart High School including Young Adult Programming * Goshen High School including Young Adult Programming * Concord High School * Jimtown High School * Marian High School * Purdue Polytechnic High School * Career Academy South Bend   **Alternate schools that we would consider serving:**   * Northridge High School * Northwood High School * Fairfield Jr./Sr. High School * LaVille Jr./Sr. High School * John Glenn High School   **Evaluation of Effectiveness:** This is critical to ensuring the program’s success and making informed improvements. Implementing a comprehensive evaluation strategy that combines multiple data collection methods, tracks long-term outcomes, and continuously uses feedback for improvement will effectively assess the program’s impact on students and make allow us to make necessary adjustments for better outcomes. Specific and measurable objectives for the Pre-ETS program that align with the State’s and WIOA’s requirements will be established. These can include skill development, self-advocacy improvement, career pathway decisions, and referrals to VR for additional services. Various data collection methods will be utilized, such as surveys, interviews, pre- and post-program assessments, and performance tracking to gather comprehensive data that allows us to measure changes, growth, or progress made by students. We will feedback from students about their experiences, the usefulness of the workshops, counseling sessions, and the impact on their preparedness for employment or further education. Feedback from educators involved in the program will be sought to understand the program’s impact on students’ academic performance and readiness for transition. We will also obtain input from employers regarding the preparedness of students in work-based settings and their integration into the workplace. Quantitative data such as academic performance metrics, VR enrollment, etc. will be collected and analyzed to measure program success. We will also gather and analyze qualitative data, including narratives or testimonials, to understand the program’s impact on individual experiences and perspectives.  **Curriculum and Resources:**  We will develop and integrate applicable, evidence-based curriculum in the delivery of Pre-ETS students. Examples of resources used to develop and integrate the curriculum include O\*NET Interest Profiler, CareerOneStop, Skills to Pay the Bills, Think College, College Navigator, SkillsUSA, Conover, JAN, and Lifecourse framework. These resources offer evidence-based approaches, assessments, and curricula validated through research or developed by reputable organizations specializing in supporting individuals with disabilities in career development and transition. Integrating these resources into the Pre-ETS program will enhance its effectiveness and align with evidence-based practices.  We will also employ resources available from the Vocational Rehabilitation staff, Level UP Indiana, PCG and other Pre-ETS providers to ensure we are using curricula that has been proven to be effective and follows established best practices. We will leverage our experience as a Project Search provider and tools from our Skills Training program to provide quality counseling. Case studies, multimedia resources, and guest speaker sessions will be used to enrich learning.  **Strategies for Increasing Referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation:**  Increasing referrals to VR for students close to exiting high school, or those in need of VR services earlier in their high school career, requires a strategic and proactive approach. It is key to collaborate with school personnel by establishing strong partnerships with school counselors, special education coordinators, and teachers to ensure they are aware of VR services. This will be accomplished by conducting training, in partnership with the appropriate VR Youth Counselor and other appropriate VR staff, for school staff to increase their understanding of VR eligibility criteria and services. We will assist schools with incorporating VR information in IEP meetings and discussing potential VR referrals and the benefits of early engagement. Recognizing personnel who actively refer students to VR services will encourage ongoing support from the school and support staff.  Additionally, we will participate in and/or organize transition fairs where VR services can be showcased alongside other postsecondary resources and/or disability services available to individuals and families. We will provide informational materials and engage with students and parents directly. Utilizing our Employment First Specialist to assist with hosting workshops and educational sessions for students, families, faculty, community employers and the public regarding VR services will further boost interest and enrollment in VR services. These sessions will introduce VR services while emphasizing the role of VR in supporting career and education development and independence.  Collaboration with local employers to create work-based learning experiences will allow us the opportunity to highlight how VR services can facilitate a smooth transition from school to work. We will partner with community organizations, disability advocacy groups, and youth organizations to increase awareness of VR and the services available and attend community events to reach a broader audience.  ADEC will utilize social media platforms to support ongoing engagement by sharing success stories, information about VR services, and upcoming events. We will use platforms popular among both students and parents. A resource center with Online resources and webinars that can be accessed by students and parents at their convenience will be developed and will cover topics such as the VR application process, available services, and success stories.  Celebrating the successes of students will also increase interest and referrals to VR services. We intend on establishing recognition programs for schools or individuals who actively participate in VR referrals and successfully transition students. We will recognize the achievements of students who have benefited from VR services. | |
| **2** | **Staffing**  Describe how you would staff this project to ensure capacity to carry out the scope of work. Identify key staff and their roles and responsibilities, including roles and responsibilities of any sub-contractors. Provide resumes for key staff. Ensure that the staffing plan is consistent with cost proposal. Describe if staff will be dedicated personnel for the project or if they will be a shared resource.  Additionally, list each collaborative partner, including local public agencies, Work One centers, VR employment service providers, local educational agencies (i.e., schools), post-secondary educational institutions, Independent Living centers, community programs, employers, or other entities. Describe collaborative partners’ roles and how each will be engaged in the project to better coordinate service delivery, reduce duplication of effort, leverage promising and innovative practices, and serve the greatest number of students possible. |
| To effectively implement and oversee the proposed Pre-ETS program, a well-defined and strategically organized staffing structure has been outlined. This structure is designed to ensure that the scope of work is carried out with precision and expertise. Key positions have been identified, each with assigned distinct roles and responsibilities, to cover the various facets of the program, including vocational counseling, work-based learning coordination, curriculum development, data and evaluation, and administrative support. This staffing approach balances dedicated personnel for the project’s core functions with shared resources for administrative tasks, ensuring efficiency and consistency. Additionally, collaborative partners from local public agencies, educational institutions, and other key stakeholders are integral components of this structure, contributing to a comprehensive and coordinated effort to empower students with disabilities on their path to successful employment and further education.  While specific job descriptions for every role have yet to be finalized, we will require that staff have required experience, knowledge, and drive to ensure they are aligned with not only ADEC’s mission and values, but also align with the requirements of WIOA and Pre-ETS. This includes ensuring that the staffing team has: knowledge of how to effectively work with younger students; the ability to engage employers and create relationships with them; capability in matching students with work opportunities; understanding constraints of the schools and regulations of the Department of Labor; knowledge in identifying and arranging supports for students within their worksites; and the ability to collaborate with additional stakeholders and partners who are also working with the students. Effective traits of staff serving students in transition, based on the research from Tilson & Simonsen (2012), include principled optimism, cultural competency, business-oriented professionalism, and network savvy. When selecting staff for the Pre-ETS program we will include these in the qualities we require. Having a robust team with varying experience will allow us to ensure that we are able to provide comprehensive and quality services to the students, families, and schools.  **Staffing Plan:**  **Associate Director of Employment Services** – Responsibilities include overall program management; coordination with collaborative partners; oversight of budget and resources; and program evaluation and reporting. This is a shared resource with ADEC’s Employment Services department. See Appendix V for resume.  **Transition Services Manager** – Responsibilities include designing and assisting student transition consultants with implementing evidence-based curriculum; developing and updating educational resources; partnering with the student transition consultants in collaborating with educators and vocational counselors to align curriculum with participant needs; and overall supervision of Pre-ETS staff and sites. The transition services manager will also assist the director with designing and utilizing data collection systems and preparing regular reports for stakeholders and funders. This is a shared resource with ADEC’s Project Search program.  **Student Transition Consultants** – The primary responsibility of this role is to provide individual and group based required Pre-ETS activities to youth with disabilities in a community and school based setting, including: job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences; counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education; workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring. It also involves providing student support and skills training to prepare students for future employment; developing and implementing individual and group activities and workshops to support Pre-ETS pre-vocational and vocational skill development; participating in the identification, coordination, and placement of students with employers for internships or volunteer opportunities, assisting students and families with identifying other community resources that may support vocational and postsecondary related goals; and maintaining a positive working relationship between ADEC, school personnel, Vocational Rehabilitation, employers, and other partnering entities to ensure the goals of the program are met. This role would not be a shared resource and the number of persons hired to fill this role will be dependent on number of schools and students that we will be providing services to.  **Employment First Specialist** – Responsibilities include establishing and managing relationships with local employers; planning and hosting workshops that provide information and education regarding employment first ideals for students, families, employers, and others; assisting students and families with understanding work incentives and benefits available to them through various public agencies; engaging WorkOne centers; and assisting the student transition consultant with identification and coordination of students with employers. This is a shared resource with ADEC’s Employment Services and Skills Training programs. See Appendix U for resume.  **Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Counselor** – Responsibilities include acting as the state liaison between the schools and us as a provider, ensuring compliance with program requirements, and assisting with training and outreach efforts.  **Collaborative Partners:**  Collaborative partners play a crucial role in the successful delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services. They are instrumental in creating a well-rounded, effective Pre-ETS program. Their involvement ensures a more holistic approach to supporting students with disabilities in their transition. Collaborative partners bring diverse expertise, resources and services to the table. By working with various entities, our program can offer a more comprehensive range of support services, addressing the multifaceted needs of students. Through this collaboration with local public agencies, schools, vocational rehabilitation, and other stake holders we can facilitate better outreach efforts. These partners can identify and refer eligible students to the program, ensuring that services reach those that can benefit the most. Partnerships enable the sharing of information and resources, reducing redundancy and maximizing the impact of available services by preventing the duplication of efforts and resources. We will be able to leverage specialized expertise and coordinate with partners to ensure a seamless transition for students. This coordination is especially critical during key transition points, such as moving from high school to postsecondary education or employment. Partnerships provide access to a broader network of resources, including connecting with employers for work-based learning opportunities and accessing community programs for additional support services. Engaging these collaborative partners can also enhance community awareness and advocacy efforts that contribute to a supportive community environment for individuals with disabilities. Finally, collaborative partnerships contribute to the long-term sustainability of Pre-ETS initiatives. By building strong relationships with key stakeholders, the program is more likely to endure and adapt to changing circumstances. Outlined below are each collaborative partner’s role and how each will be engaged in the project:  **Local Public Agencies:**   * Provide support services and resources for individuals with disabilities. * Collaborate on outreach efforts. * Offer expertise in navigating government assistance programs. * Assist in advocating for inclusive practices within the community.   **Work One Centers:**   * Assist with information about job placement services and job search support. * Connect participants with available resources. * Facilitate access to vocational training opportunities. * Contribute to outreach efforts to identify potential program partners.   **Local Educational Agencies (Schools):**   * Identify and refer eligible students to the Pre-ETS program. * Collaborate on developing transition plans for students. * Provide access to educational resources and support services. * Offer insights into students’ academic needs and progress. * Contribute to outreach efforts with students and families.   **Post-Secondary Educational Institutions:**   * Provide information on post-secondary education opportunities. * Facilitate connections for students interested in higher education. * Collaborate on career pathways for students. * Offer guidance on academic requirements and accommodations in postsecondary settings.   **Independent Living Centers and Community Resource Providers:**   * Support individuals with disabilities in enhancing independent living skills. * Collaborate on providing resources for self-advocacy. * Collaborate on developing personalized plans for students transitioning to independent living. * Offer expertise on accessibility and accommodations in living and other various environments.   **Community Programs:**   * Offer additional support services and resources. * Collaborate on outreach and awareness campaigns. * Contribute to the development of inclusive practices within the community. * Provide mentorship opportunities for program participants.   **Employers:**   * Provide work-based learning opportunities, internships, and apprenticeships. * Participate in mentorship programs for students. * Collaborate on developing inclusive workplace practices. * Offer insights into industry-specific skills and requirements.   **Other Entities:**  Depending on the specific partnerships, other entities could play roles such as providing mentorship, offering resources, or participating in collaborative initiatives. They may also contribute unique perspectives and resources to enhance the program’s effectiveness. | |
| **3** | Describe relevant experience and qualifications in implementation for a project of this size and scope, including credentials and demonstrated experience in the development and/or provision of employment supports to students with disabilities or any similar services with the target population. Please also include background and expertise of staff that would play a substantial role in the delivery of services. |
| ADEC is a nonprofit organization that proudly advocates for and serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Elkhart and St. Joseph counties so they can live lives full of informed choice and possibility. First established in 1952 by a group of parents wanting something more for their children with disabilities, ADEC now provides programming including Day Programs, Residential, Child and Family Services, Transportation, Employment Services, Guardianship, Summer Camp, and internship opportunities for those that we serve. ADEC employs nearly 400 staff and provides care for over 1,100 members of the community with intellectual disabilities.  ADEC’s Employment Service Program works with individuals to understand their skills and preferences by using hands-on assessments, job shadowing, and interviews. In cooperation with vocational rehabilitation and local businesses, ADEC supports individuals in Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties, providing job matching, coaching, and support at no cost to employers. Once employed, consultants offer individualized levels of support to aid the success of both participants and employers. ADEC’s Skills & Training Center is dedicated to assisting participants in discovering and utilizing their individual abilities in the workplace, at home, and within the community through interactive classroom instruction and activity. The program is open to all individuals 18 or older with intellectual and developmental disabilities interested in developing personal independence for living and working in the community. It is not a one-size-fits-all program but is instead catered to each participant’s diverse needs and individual goals with the intention of promoting personal growth in maximizing functional ability, independence, and exposure to daily life activities.  In addition to general support and employment services, ADEC has a long history of supporting students specifically in their transition from high school to employment. For over a decade, ADEC has partnered with South Bend Community Schools, Vocational Rehabilitation and Memorial Hospital to support students through the Project SEARCH program. Project SEARCH is a transition-to-work program for students with disabilities. The one-year employment preparation program takes place entirely within Beacon Memorial Hospital facilitating a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hand-on training through total workplace immersion. Students in this program acquire competitive, marketable, and transferable skills. They also build communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, which are important to their overall development as young workers.  ADEC is well-equipped to implement a pre-ETS project of this size and scope. Implementing and using tools and resources from our other student and youth services places us in a position to be ready to move forward with program and curriculum development as soon as we are notified of the project award. ADEC is a CARF accredited agency, that regularly receives the maximum 3-year accreditation during survey cycles. This means that ADEC satisfies each of the CARF Accreditation Conditions and demonstrated substantial conformance to the standards. We are designed and operated to benefit the people served. Our organization demonstrates ongoing quality improvements.  Susan Faltynski, the Associate Director of Employment Services, will be the lead in the design, organization, and implementation of our pre-ETS programming. She has been with ADEC for almost 12 years, serving in Employment Services for the entirety of her tenure. She is passionate about employment services for individuals with disabilities and looks for every opportunity to engage with the community and the state to offer improved outcomes and numerous opportunities for those we serve. Prior to coming to ADEC she worked at Bashor Children’s Home where she provided direct care and support to youth, many of whom also experienced various disabilities and barriers to education and employment. She currently oversees not only the VR employment services offered by ADEC, but also Project Search and the Skills & Training Center. All programs that focus on assisting individuals explore, identify, and pursue their employment and career goals. | |
| **4** | **Training**  Describe how staff training will be conducted and what process will be followed. Share sample training documentation that will be utilized and describe additional training content that would be developed (e.g., system manual, user manual etc.). |
| Comprehensive staff training for Pre-Employment Transition Services programming is crucial to ensure that team members are well-equipped to provide effective support to students with disabilities. ADEC will utilize a variety of training delivery methods, including in-person workshops, webinars, online modules, and hands-on exercises to accommodate different learning styles. We will engage expert facilitators, such as Level Up Indiana, to conduct special training sessions. The VR Youth Counselor for our area will also be a crucial support resource in our training process, to ensure we are using the most up to date resources and implementing state best practices. Beyond initial training, ongoing support and coaching to staff members will be provided so that they can continue to grow within their positions. This will include peer mentoring, regular check-ins, and opportunities for additional training based on evolving needs.  ADEC staff are required to complete agency onboarding upon hire. This introduces them to the agency and programs offered, as well as our values and mission. Additionally, they are taught best practices in working with individuals with disabilities. This orientation also provides certification in first aid, CPR, and MANDT crisis interventions. After completion of the agency orientation, staff then begin training within their departments. This training is tailored to meet the needs of the program, persons served, and the staff receiving the training.  All pre-ETS staff will complete online training courses offered through Level Up Indiana, which can be previewed here: <https://pre-ets.invrtraining.com/pre-ets-resources>. Using this will ensure that all staff are knowledgeable about evidence-based practices and gain practical strategies for teaching and supporting students. Additionally, they will have access to training and resources available through Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (INARF), Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), and other local and national member organizations that support individuals with disabilities.  General training that project staff may receive includes:   * Training on cultural competency to ensure staff members are sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and needs of the students they will be working with. * Leveraging technology for service delivery, including virtual counseling, online resources, and tools for tracking student progress. * Legal and ethical considerations relevant to working with students with disabilities, including privacy laws, disclosure, and accommodation requirements. * Fostering collaboration among staff members, as well as building effective teams to enhance overall program success. * Keeping staff updated on the latest best practices in the field of vocational rehabilitation, employment supports, and educational services for students with disabilities. | |
| **5** | **Documentation/Billing**  Describe procedures related to how data and required documentation listed in attachment E would be collected and entered into BRS’ Pre-ETS web portal (see **Attachment F, Overview of Web Portal**). Outline the process that will be used to meet the states expectations for timely and accurate billing, and ensuring that expenses claimed align with service delivery data entered into the Pre-ETS web portal. |
| Efficient documentation and billing procedures are essential for successful implementation of the project. Below is an outline of the procedures related to data collection, entry into the BRS Pre-ETS web portal, and the billing process:  **Data Collection and Entry into BRS Pre-ETS Web Portal:**   1. **Data Collection Procedures:**    * Establish standardized procedures for collecting relevant data including participant information, service delivery details, and other required documentation.    * Ensure that all staff members are trained on the data collection process, emphasizing accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. 2. **Utilization of BRS Pre-ETS Web Portal:**    * Familiarize staff with the features and functionalities of the BRS Pre-ETS web portal.    * Implement a secure and organized system for storing physical documentation before data entry. 3. **Real-time Data Entry:**    * Encourage real-time data entry to the BRS web portal to ensure that information is current and accurate, including partnership documentation with students when appropriate.    * Develop a schedule for data entry to avoid backlog and ensure timely reporting. 4. **Verification and Quality Assurance:**    * Establish a verification process to ensure data accuracy before submission.    * Implement a quality assurance protocol to periodically review data entries and identify any discrepancies or errors. 5. **Documentation Compliance Checks:**    * Conduct regular checks to ensure that all required documentation aligns with the data entered into the web portal.    * Provide feedback and training to staff members if discrepancies are identified.    * Work with Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Counselor as concerns or issues arise.   **Billing Process:**   1. **Timely Billing Submission:**    * Develop a schedule for billing submissions aligned with state expectations.    * Ensure that all required data, including participant information and service delivery details, are accurately reflected in the billing submissions. 2. **Verification of Expenses:**    * Implement a thorough review process to verify that claimed expenses align with the service delivery data entered into the Pre-ETS web portal.    * Cross-reference invoices with documented service delivery records to ensure consistency. 3. **Audit Trails and Documentation:**    * Maintain detailed audit trails for all billing submissions, documenting the rationale for each claimed expense.    * Retain copies of all documentation related to service delivery, ensuring that it can be accessed for audit purposes. 4. **Staff Training on Billing Procedures:**    * Train staff members involved in billing on the proper procedures, emphasizing the importance of accuracy and compliance with state guidelines.    * Keep staff informed about any updates or changes to billing requirements. 5. **Communication with BRS:**    * Establish clear communication channels with the BRS to address any questions, concerns, or clarifications related to billing submissions.    * Proactively communicate with the BRS to provide updates on program progress and address any potential issues. 6. **Continuous Improvement:**    * Implement a feedback loop to continually improve the billing process based on lessons learned and identified areas for enhancement.    * Stay informed about any changes in state regulations or expectations related to billing and adjust procedures accordingly.   By implementing these procedures, we can ensure that data collection, entry into the web portal, and the billing process are streamlined, accurate, and in compliance with state expectations. Regular monitoring and continuous improvement efforts contribute to the overall success of the Pre-ETS program.  Top of Form  Attachments E and F, as mentioned in this section’s prompt, were not included in the RFS package. Included attachment E was this Technical Proposal and F was the blank QandA Excel sheet. There were no documents that provide information regarding the portal and required documentation included so this response may not satisfy specific information from those documents. Clarification is available upon request and provision of the appropriate documents. | |