

MASSHIRE GREATER NEW BEDFORD WORKFORCE BOARD

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WIOA OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMS RFP GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGION FISCAL YEAR 2025

IMPORTANT DATES

- 03/21/24 Public notice and RFP released
- 04/04/24 Information Session – 10AM
- 04/16/24 MANDATORY Bidders Conference – 1PM
- 04/22/24 Written question deadline – 4 PM
- 04/26/24 Responses to questions and bidders conference questions released – 4PM
- 05/09/24 Proposals (electronic and hard copy) due by 2PM
- 05/09/24 Public opening of proposals - 3PM
- 05/10/24 Proposals distributed to reviewers
- 05/15/24 Review team returns scoring materials by 12PM
- 05/16/24 WB Staff /Review team meets
- 05/21/24 Written recommendations to Executive Committee
- 05/28/24 (Expected): Announcement of Award
- 06/07/24 Appeal period deadline per policy (if applicable)
- 06/12/24 Signature of contracts deadline
- 07/08/24 (Expected): Contracts issued and commence
- 07/11/24 Required vendor training with Workforce Board – 3PM

NOTE: Online – Meetings (w/link provided - TBA), Timeline: Subject To Change

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board
25 ELM STREET SUITE 203
NEW BEDFORD, MA 02740-6694
774-762-5081 | MASSHIREGREATERNEWBEDFORD.COM

*The MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, Inc. is an
Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Organization*

*MassHire program & services are funded in part by US Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment & Training Administration grants
as well as non-federal grant*

- *Additional details furnished upon request*

I. INTRODUCTION

The MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board (hereinafter referred to as Workforce Board) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) for qualified parties to provide programs for education, work experience and employment and training services to **Out-of-School Youth (OOSY)** (aged 16-24) under WIOA.

Proposals must offer services to one or more of the following municipalities, collectively known as the Greater New Bedford (GNB) region: New Bedford, Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Lakeville, Marion, Mattapoisett, Rochester, and Wareham.

The period of performance is expected to commence 7/01/24 and terminate no later than 06/30/25. The commencement date will be negotiated with successful vendors.

Successful respondents will be expected to implement all aspects of the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) regulations as outlined in WIOA final rules and published in the Federal Register:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/08/19/2016-15975/workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act>

II. OVERVIEW OF INTENDED FUNDED PROGRAM PURPOSES

The Workforce Board is seeking non-profit (501c3) or licensed for-profit providers in or near the region. Programs must address both education and workforce development strategies, including: a) work experience that prepares youth for ongoing education and/or long-term careers; and b) entry into the workplace. Priority industry Sectors are Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Hospitality/Customer Service or Maritime/Marine. Other industries will be considered with documented evidence of need. Programs must address the needs of youth who may have multiple barriers and either provide the fourteen (14) youth elements of WIOA or refer participants to these services.

III. WORKFORCE INNOVATION and OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) BACKGROUND

Youth services provided under WIOA are designed to help youth access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy. WIOA builds on proven practices such as sector strategies, career pathways, regional economic approaches, and work-based training.

WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and gives a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other Federal, State, Local, and philanthropic resources to support Out-of-School Youth. The goal is to provide high quality services for youth/young adults (aged 16-24) beginning with career exploration/guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, resulting in a good job along a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education. For more information on WIOA, visit: <https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/>.

IV. FUNDING

Under this RFP, approximately \$350,000 is available for Out of School Youth programs; the Workforce Board anticipates awarding two to six contracts. During the decision-making process, the funding amount and number of contracts may change. Proposals that are budgeted for a minimum of \$25,000 and a maximum of \$150,000 should reflect expected per participant costs ranging from \$3,000 to \$6,000, respectively. The Workforce Board reserves the right to negotiate with successful respondents on the final program deliverables and funding. Applicants must utilize an accounting system to track their expenditures and revenues relating to these grant funds.

V. FRAMEWORK SERVICES

The successful respondent is required to work cooperatively with the Framework Services Provider (FSP), MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board, to meet all the requirements of WIOA youth programming. A required training on Framework Services will be held after awards are made.

The FSP will:

- assist in outreach and recruitment
- determine eligibility for each applicant
- provide an assessment, including the compilation of test results
- develop relevant service plan on each enrollee
- maintain case files on enrollees
- compile all pertinent data regarding participants, activities and follow-up for entry into a centralized database

The FSP will develop its Annual Performance Plan and reporting procedures.

VI. WIOA ELEMENTS

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 123) lists fourteen (14) program elements that must be made available to eligible youth. RFP responses are not required to provide all of those elements; however, all fourteen (14) elements **must be made available** if a youth is assessed and requires those services. The Workforce Board requires that WIOA Title I Out-of-School Vendor's provide at least eleven (11) out of the fourteen (14) elements. Applicants are encouraged to provide the full array of services.

For additional information on the fourteen (14) elements visit this Workforce GPS site:

https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/01/31/09/44/WIOA_Youth_Program_Elements

VII. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Successful Out-of-School Youth programs funded through this RFP will provide a combination of education services, exposure to employment, work experience and additional supportive services to provide each participant with a recognized credential, personal stability and an understanding of the requirements of today's workforce.

VIII. TARGET GROUP OF ELIGIBLE YOUTH

An Out-of-School Youth is defined as an eligible youth:

1. Not younger than age 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment; and
2. Not attending any school (as defined under State law);
3. One or more of the following:
 - a. school dropout;
 - b. within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recently completed school year calendar quarter;
 - c. recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner;
 - d. an offender;
 - e. homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, or a runaway;
 - f. in foster care, or has aged out of the foster care system, or is 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;
 - g. individual who is pregnant or parenting;
 - h. individual with a disability; or
low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

IX. PROGRAM DESIGN

While there is preference for Out-of-School Youth programs proposed under this RFP to incorporate at least the three program designs of work readiness preparation and work experience/employment; providers are strongly encouraged to provide all four components:

- **Educational Remediation** leading to an alternative high school diploma or recognized occupational certificate;
- **Work Readiness Preparation**, either an on-the-job or classroom-based experience teaching youth how to research job opportunities, obtain employment and subsequently how to maintain employment via soft skills development
- **Work Experience/Employment**, via a summer job, part-time year-round employment or an internship, a job shadow arrangement, or other actual or simulated job experience.
- **Service Learning – Performance Measures & Rates with adherence to WIOA guidelines as outlined herein (Section X).**

For information on work experiences paid and unpaid under WIOA can be found here: <https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/01/19/14/27/Paid-and-Unpaid-Work-Experience>

For budget purposes related to work experience, review Department of Career Services Workforce Issuance 19.106 [MassWorkforce WIOA Youth policy issuances | Mass.gov](#)

Program Components

Respondents to this RFP shall present a program concept that includes as many of the fourteen (14) WIOA Youth Elements as possible. If the RFP does not offer all fourteen (14) WIOA youth elements, the response shall detail *how* the organization will refer youth for these services.

Work experience funding is defined by:

- Wages/stipends paid for participation in a work experience;
- Staff time working to identify and develop a work experience opportunity, including staff time spent working with employers to identify and develop the work experience;
- Staff time working with employers to ensure a successful work experience, including staff time spent managing the work experience;
- Staff time spent evaluating work experience;
- Participant work experience orientation sessions;
- Classroom training or the required academic education component directly related to the work experience;
- Employer work experience orientation sessions;
- Incentive payments directly tied to the completion of work experience;
- Employability skills/job readiness training to prepare youth for a work experience.

Requirements for Priority Occupational Sector Targeting

Proposals shall align with the Priority Industry Sectors of Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality/Customer Service, Marine/Maritime in all industries. Other industries may be considered with documented evidence of need.

Limits on Proposed Enrollments & Student-Teacher Ratio

- Programs may present any slot number, and shall be designed for the maximum number of slots that can be served with available funding;
- A final award may fund programs at higher or lower enrollment levels than those proposed;
- Student-teacher ratios shall not exceed 8 to 1;
- Volunteers that assist regular instructional staff may be utilized to achieve this ratio *if* an agency's volunteer program exists that provides training and supervision to volunteers;
- Designs that ensure more than one staff person is always available in a classroom are preferred;
- Note: The Workforce Board may give positive consideration to designs that provide comprehensive support to fewer students in order to maximize the likelihood of student success.

Program Hours

Out-of-School Programs must provide services to participants for at least twenty (20) hours per week.

Start and End Dates and Program Length

- Programs shall be designed to start on 7/01/24 and provide continuous programming through the end of the contract date of no later than 6/30/25;
- Open entry/exit designs are encouraged;

- Preference will be given to pilot programs that have the potential to operate year-round and offer continuing, long-term service to youth with substantial educational needs.

Work Experience

Work experience as outlined in the required program activities may include paid and unpaid employment, job shadowing, or internships. Wages and fringe costs may be included as program costs in the proposed budget or they may be provided as an in-kind match. Outline both the work experience staff and related costs requested.

Note: Any provider receiving funding for wages is responsible for administering those youth wages. The provider will not be allowed to use MHGNBWB's payroll or insurance to facilitate said wages.

X. PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS

In FY25, Workforce Board programs are expected to attain at a minimum the following performance measures where applicable and adhere to WIOA performance standards and rates. The required vendor training will explain the performance measures and reporting requirements. New rates for common measures may be updated during the year. These measures include (subject to change and will be detailed in contracts):

- Entered employment or post-secondary institution: 75% minimum;
- High school diploma or certificate attainment rate: 64% minimum;
- Literacy and Numeracy gain: 37% minimum;
- Placement in Employment, Training or Education - 2nd Quarter after Exit;
- Retention in Employment, Training or Education - 4th Quarter after Exit;
- Median Earnings - 2nd Quarter after Exit;
- Credential Rate – recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation or within 1 year after exit;
- In Program Measureable Skills Gain (meaning to be determined);
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers (meaning to be determined).

XI. ASSURANCES, CERTIFICATIONS & FINANCIAL VIABILITY

- Each proposal **must execute** the attached certifications relating to Debarment, Equal Opportunity and Non-discrimination and include them with the proposal;
- Each proposal **must be signed** and dated by an authorized party;
- If applicable, the organization **must document its compliance with Audit Requirements 2 CFR 200.501**;
- All programs **must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**.

NOTE: Failure to include these items will result in disqualification of a proposal.

XII. BIDDERS' RESPONSE & SUBMISSION

Each submission shall be concise and include in order:

- Cover Sheet
- Program Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Debarment, EEO Certification and audit (as necessary)

One original that includes authorized party signatures, plus five copies and a USB including all pages of the application must be received no later than **May 9, 2024 @ 2 PM**

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board, Inc.
Attn: Jamilyn Soares, Youth Program Coordinator
25 Elm Street Suite 203
New Bedford, MA 02740-6694

It is the sole responsibility of the bidder to ensure that required proposal materials are received on or before the stated deadline. The Workforce Board is not responsible for costs incurred by individuals or organizations as a result of responding to this RFP.

XIII. BIDDERS CONFERENCE

- Proposers *may* attend an RFP Information Session on April 4, 2024 @ 10AM.
- Agencies that intend to submit a proposal are **REQUIRED** to attend the MANDATORY BIDDERS CONFERENCE on April 16, 2024 @ 1PM.

RSVP to Jamilyn Soares, Youth Program Coordinator, by e-mail: Jamilyn@mhqnb.com.

Staff will prepare and post answers to questions posed at the Bidders Conference or submitted electronically on or before April 22, 2024 no later than 4PM. Answers will be available at <https://masshiregreaternewbedford.com> no later than 4PM on April 26, 2024.

XIV. VENDOR TRAINING

A mandatory vendor training will take place with FSP on July 11, 2024 @ 3PM.

XV. REVIEW OF RESPONSES

Proposals will be reviewed by reviewers of the Workforce Board and staff and rated on their ability to achieve the program goals and their responses to program design guidelines. The maximum points earned per section are specified. Failure to respond completely to a specific item will result in a loss of points. The Workforce Board reviews the recommendations, along with reviewers' ratings and comments. Applicants whose proposals are approved may be invited to meet with staff to finalize program design. The process of finalizing the program design is meant to be an ongoing negotiation involving the training provider and the Workforce Board. The final proposal is subject to review and approval by the Workforce Board, contingent upon completion of a satisfactory cost/price analysis. The final agreement to contract is contingent upon successful contract negotiation. The Workforce Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

XVI.CONTRACTS

Contracts developed as a result of this procurement are based on cost reimbursement. Under the terms of “Cost reimbursement”, a contractor may bill the Workforce Board monthly *only after program costs have been incurred* within that contract’s time period. The Workforce Board will reimburse the provider for legitimate costs connected with the contract *upon receipt of a provider’s invoice and appropriate back-up documentation*.

XVII.TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For questions about the RFP, contact Jamilyn Soares, Youth Program Coordinator at 774-762-5069 or by email: Jamilyn@mhgnb.com.

NOTE: The FY25 application is enclosed herein this document.

**WIOA OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMS
FY25 APPLICATION**

I. Cover Sheet

Name of Organization:

Address:

Phone:

Contact Person:

Title:

Phone:

FAX:

E-Mail:

Program Name:

Total Program Budget: \$

WIOA Budget Requested: \$

Number of Trainees Requested:

Cost Per Student: \$

Minimum Number of Enrollees Required to Operate the Program:

Minimum Grant \$ Required to Operate the Program: \$

(Awards will range from \$20,000-\$100,000)

Print Name of Authorized Party:

Signature of Authorized Party

Date

Title

II. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE (20 points/1 page maximum/12pt font single-spaced)

Organizational Background

- Describe your organization and its experience with the provision of education and/or training
- Indicate the particular youth service backgrounds and qualifications of staff that your organization
- Describe how your organization's staff development policies and activities are designed to meet the program outcomes (i.e. instruction, service learning and work experience).

III. **Service Strategy (40 points/4 pages maximum)**

- The number and targeted population of Out-of-School youth for your program.
- Outline your recruitment strategy and method of implementation. Please provide supplemental advertisement materials. Examples may include: flyers and/ or news postings.
- The number and type of staff, the curriculum areas, and the daily and weekly schedule for the project.
- Describe the program components.
- Indicate which Industry sectors your proposal addresses.
- Describe if the program will develop and deliver work experience.
- Will the proposed services be in a new program or will they be integrated into an existing program that your organization is already operating?
- Provide program schedule with outline of services provided.
- How will your program coordinate its efforts with the Framework Service Provider to assure maximum acceptable outcomes for each participant?
- Identify any collaborators or partners for the project.
- Which of the fourteen (14) elements you will be providing and how will you make available the remaining elements.

IV. Outcomes (20 points/2 pages maximum)

- Identify specific, measurable outcomes expected as a result of your proposed program.
- Referring to the performance measures detailed in the RFP, in your narrative describe your organization's previous performance, over the past two years, with the target youth group. If you have not received WIOA funding in the past, please try to correlate your organization's performance as closely as possible to these measures – education, employment, and work readiness preparation.

V. BUDGET SHEET

ORGANIZATION NAME:

PROGRAM:

| Line Item | Activities Except Work Experience | Work Experience | Budget Request Total | Other In-Kind or Match (specify) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Required budget elements | | | | |
| <i>Staff Salaries</i> | | | | |
| <i>Fringe Benefits</i> | | | | |
| <i>Participant Wages</i> | | | | |
| <i>Participant Fringes</i> | | | | |
| <i>Certified Credentials</i> | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Rent/Premises | | | | |
| Contractual (specify) | | | | |
| Materials/Supplies | | | | |
| Equipment | | | | |
| Student Transportation | | | | |
| Telephone | | | | |
| Advertising | | | | |
| Other (specify) | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Total | | | | |

(See next page for required Budget Narrative)

VI. Budget Narrative (20 points/2 pages maximum)

- Provide a narrative description for each line item included on the Budget Worksheet.
- Describe any matching funds that may be leveraged to support the program.

**MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board, Inc.
WIOA YOUTH PROGRAMS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS -- FISCAL YEAR 2025**

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

As a condition to the award of financial assistance under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) of 2014, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Section 188 of WIOA, which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries (otherwise eligible grant program applicants or enrollees) on the basis of either their citizenship/status as lawfully admitted immigrants authorized to work in the United States or their participation in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

SIGNATURE

DATE

NAME OF AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY

TITLE

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY
MATTERS
PRIMARY COVERED TRANSACTIONS**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, Participants' responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988 Federal Register (Pages 19160-19211).

1. The prospective primary participant certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief that it and its principals:
 - a. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency;
 - b. Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of record, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.
 - c. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a government entity (Federal, State or local) with the commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and
 - d. Have not within a three-year period preceding this application / proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State or local) terminated for cause or default.

2. Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

SIGNATURE

DATE

NAME OF AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY

TITLE

**REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
APPEALS & COMPLAINTS**

Any organization making application under this RFP has the right to file an appeal. A bidder may file an Appeal in compliance with the requirements of MassWorkforce Issuance 100.DCS 01.102 "Procurement and Contracting" Attachment C (D) 5 which mandates that the review and evaluation of a solicitation requires a description of the appeal/protest process. As such and for purposes of the Competitive Selection of the Operator/Service Provider:

- If the MassHire Workforce Board has made a determination of award to the dissatisfaction of a bidder, that bidder may appeal/protest to the Local Complaint Officer (CO) within **10 business days** of receipt of notification of non-award (*provide name and address – if a Local Board staff is named as the CO than an alternative non- Board member CO must be named*).

- The Local CO must make a written determination within **20 business days** of receipt of the appeal/protest.

- The local CO may choose to make a determination based solely on the information included in the case file or conduct further investigation before issuing a written determination.

- If the CO has made a written request to the appellant (or the appellant's authorized representative) for additional information, the **20 business day period** does not begin until the requested information has been received by the local CO.

- If the CO is unable to contact the appellant for the purposes of obtaining additional information needed to resolve a complaint, a written request for information must be sent via **certified mail** or through some other form of communication where receipt can be verified. If a complainant does not respond, the CO must inform the complainant in writing that the matter is considered **resolved**.

- The local CO may also choose to resolve the complaint by convening a local hearing. Only the designated local CO or authorized back-up may preside at a local complaint hearing. If the local CO deems that a hearing is necessary, the local CO will notify the parties (in writing) that the matter has been scheduled for a formal hearing. The notice must inform the parties of certain conditions of the hearing process that include:

- the date, time and location of the hearing,
 - instruction that the local CO will conduct and regulate the course of the hearing to assure full consideration of all relevant issues and that actions necessary to ensure an orderly hearing are followed, and
 - instruction that the local CO must rule on the introduction of evidence* and afford the parties the opportunity to present, examine, and cross-examine witnesses.

***NOTE:** For clarity it must be stated that an administrative hearing is not the same as a Court of Law. Technical rules of evidence *do not apply*. It is up to the local CO to follow principles and procedures that are designed to assure credible evidence that can be tested through cross-examination.

- The CO must provide the complainant with a written determination. The CO must include the right to appeal within the written determination. Notification must be given that the complainant may submit a request for a State level appeal and/or hearing and that it must be made in writing **within 20 business days** of the receipt of the local determination.

To file a formal request for appeal contact:

Local Complaint Officer
Rodney Solomon, Complaint Officer
MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center

25 Elm Street, Suite 2023
New Bedford, MA, 02740
Email: RSolomon@masshiregnbcc.com
Telephone: 774-762-5078

APPEAL OF MASSHIRE WORKFORCE BOARD COMPETITIVE SELECTION OF ONE-STOP OPERATOR/SERVICE PROVIDER

An entity that bid and was not selected under a competitive process (as required in WIOA§107(10)(A) and 20 CFR 678.605) by the MassHire (Local) Board as MassHire (Local) One-Stop Operator/Service Provider may appeal that determination to the MassHire Workforce Board following local procurement requirements. If the local determination to uphold the denial of the award does not resolve the appeal to the satisfaction of the appellant, the appellant may request a state-level appeal and/or formal appeal hearing in writing within **10 business days** of receiving the denial of

The request for appeal and/or formal appeal hearing must be sent to:

State Complaint Officer
Jose V. Ocasio, Complaint Officer
Department of Career Services
19 Staniford Street
Charles F. Hurley Bldg.
Boston, MA 02114
Email: dcsunifiedcomplaint@massmail.state.ma.us
Telephone: 617-626-5587