



***REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:***  
**Adult Job Training Services**  
**Under the**  
**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**

**City of Boston**  
**Thomas M. Menino, Mayor**

**Economic Development and Industrial Corporation**  
John F. Palmieri, *Executive Director*

**Office of Jobs and Community Services**  
Constance J. Doty, *Director*

**Boston Private Industry Council**  
Gary Gottlieb, M.D., President & CEO,  
Brigham & Women's Medical Center, *Chair*  
Neil Sullivan, *Executive Director*

***ISSUE DATE:*** *June 8, 2009*  
***BIDDERS' CONFERENCE:*** *June 23, 2009, 10:00 a.m. Copley Library*  
***LETTER OF INTENT DUE:*** *June 26, 2009*  
***PROPOSALS DUE:*** ***July 13, 2009***  
***Responses must be delivered by 4:00 p.m. to***  
***43 Hawkins Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Boston, MA***

***Inquiries:*** *Ken. Barnes.JCS@cityofboston.gov*

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**LETTER OF INTENT TO BID**  
***ARRA ADULT JOB TRAINING***  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**Letter of Intent due June 26<sup>th</sup>**

This is to notify the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services the following organization intends to submit a proposal in response to the ARRA Adult Job Training RFP.  
(Should you subsequently decide not to submit, please let us know.)

**Lead Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Anticipated Employer, Career Center or other partner(s):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature/Title: Lead Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please address correspondence to:**

Cindy Chow  
Jobs and Community Services  
Planning and Policy Development – 3B  
43 Hawkins Street  
Boston, MA 02114

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS) is the City of Boston's workforce development agency. Under the leadership of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, JCS administers funding from the US Department of Labor, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and other sources for the purpose of supporting adult education, job training, and youth employment services. JCS will administer the workforce development portion of Boston's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. The Boston Private Industry Council has oversight responsibility for ARRA workforce development funds. This Request for Proposals covers group training services under the ARRA.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is designed to save and create jobs, boost the economy, and transform it for long-term growth and stability. The Act mandates a high level of transparency, oversight and accountability in order to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and the public can see the results of its investment.

ARRA includes funds to help workers find jobs through training and employment services. These funds are being distributed through the US Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) system, an existing federal program with proven track records and tough accountability measures already in place. As with WIA, the ARRA provides formula funds in the categories of (1) dislocated workers, (2) low-income adults, and (3) low-income youth. This Request for Proposals (RFP) covers the first two of those categories.

In addition to ARRA formula funds, the Department of Labor will be issuing National Emergency Grants for dislocated workers, as well as competitive discretionary grants for worker training in high growth and emerging industry sectors, with an emphasis on healthcare and energy efficiency careers. All such grants were expected to follow standard WIA regulations regarding eligibility, procurement, reporting, and monitoring.

## II. PURPOSE OF FUNDS

Under the Workforce Investment Act, local workforce investment areas distribute training funds through vouchers known as Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Job-seekers use their ITAs to select training services from a list of approved training vendors. A large portion of Boston's ARRA adult training funding will be used in this way, to meet the very high demand for training vouchers.

However, ARRA also allows localities to engage in **group contracting**, a model which has generally been discouraged under WIA. Through group contracting, a local workforce investment area selects, via an RFP, training and related services for a group of job-seekers interested in the same career. Under ARRA, group training is to be used to fill gaps and reach populations not easily served through the voucher system. Boston intends to use both group contracting and vouchers to meet the needs of job-seekers. Some ARRA funds will be used to expand the ITA system, and some are being issued through this RFP for group contracting. The exact amounts in each category will depend in part on the quality of

responses to this Request for Proposals. Through this RFP, JCS seeks to identify providers for group training services for specific populations.

Two basic target populations, **low-income adults** and **dislocated workers**, are identified in the ARRA. Low-income adults are defined as individuals 18 and older whose receive public assistance under a federal, state or local income-based public assistance program (e.g. Food Stamps), or whose income would qualify them for such a program, and who have citizenship and/or resident alien status allowing them to work. Special provisions apply to persons with disabilities, foster children, and the homeless. More detailed information can be found in the Best Practices Guide at [bostonjcs.org](http://bostonjcs.org).

A dislocated worker is defined as someone who:

- ✓ Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff from employment;
- ✓ Is eligible for or has exhausted unemployment insurance;
- ✓ Has demonstrated an attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment and is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation;
- ✓ Has been terminated or laid off or received notification of termination or layoff from employment as a result of a permanent closure or substantial layoff;
- ✓ Is employed at a facility where the employer has made the general announcement that the facility will close within a 180 days;
- ✓ Was self-employed but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community or because of a natural disaster; or
- ✓ Is a displaced homemaker who is no longer supported by another family member.

JCS is interested in serving both of these target populations with these stimulus funds. Within both categories, the emphasis will be using ARRA group training funds to meet the needs of lower-skilled individuals who may not be easily served through the ITA voucher system. In addition, JCS has a particular interest in reaching several sub-populations which require extra attention. These include, but are not limited to:

- Young adult males, who currently have an extremely high rate of unemployment;
- Ex-offenders, in need of employment in order to build a new life;
- The growing homeless population (including at-risk or recently-housed);
- Individuals laid-off from low-wage jobs in disappearing fields, in need of re-training;
- Limited-English-speaking individuals, in need of English instruction and job skills;
- High-school drop-outs, in need of both education and occupational training;
- Returning veterans and eligible spouses in need of job skills and placement;
- Persons with disabilities who face physical and other barriers to employment.

This is not an exhaustive list. Proposals will be entertained for any and all categories of low-income and/or dislocated adults. Participants must be 18 or over, and must be residents of the city of Boston or laid-off from a Boston workplace. Funded programs will

be subject to close monitoring for operations in compliance with contract terms and conditions. JCS reserves the right to withhold contract payments in the event of non-compliance or under-performance.

JCS expects applicants to submit proposals reflecting the needs of the target population they have identified. For example, if the target population lacks high school diplomas or basic English language skills, the program must integrate appropriate basic educational services of sufficient intensity to increase skill levels in a reasonably short time frame. If the program aims to serve the working poor, the proposal must show how the class schedule will accommodate the work schedules of the participants.

### **III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Eligible applicants include non-profit and for-profit providers of training and education services. Providers need not be located in Boston; however, accessibility for Boston residents will be a key evaluation criterion. Proposals must demonstrate capacity to provide state-of-the-art services to successfully prepare people for employment.

For services under the ARRA, Boston requires from vendors the following competencies:

- Staff expertise in providing proactive case management to support clients in overcoming barriers to training, retaining their jobs or completing a program.
- Demonstrated ability to modify curriculum and instructional methodology to meet the needs of people with a variety of learning styles and ability levels.
- Internal monitoring capabilities which allow for program modification as needed.
- Demonstrated ability to successfully educate, train and job-place dislocated workers and low-income adults.
- Staff experience in engaging employers and strong employer involvement in program design.
- Staffing patterns that support proposed education, training and support services.
- Demonstrated ability to ramp up capacity and provide services in a timely manner to meet the accelerated demands of ARRA.

### **IV. SERVICES REQUESTED**

In early March, 2009, the Office of Jobs and Community Services and the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) issued a draft statement of principles for the use of ARRA workforce development funding. In late March, a public hearing was held to solicit comment on the draft statement of principles, and on Boston's workforce development policies in general. Those principles, now incorporated into this RFP, include:

- Provision of high quality services leading to employment with benefits at family sustaining wages or at a minimum Boston's official Living Wage.

- Programs designed to meet the needs of special target populations with multiple barriers to employment.
- Integrated training services incorporating ESOL and/or adult basic skills leading to a high school diploma equivalency (GED), and connections to higher education.
- The use of technology in education and training programs to increase efficiency and effectiveness while meeting customer needs.
- Investment in comprehensive assessment processes which value “customer choice” for those entering job training programs.
- Reemployment of dislocated workers and a commitment to provide training and related services to low-income adults with multiple barriers to employment.
- Dual customer approaches to training and education which enhance the labor market for both the job seeker and employer.
- The inclusion of innovative training models designed to meet the needs of dislocated adults who seek to retrain for a high-demand industry.

Through this RFP, JCS seeks a range of services and programs. In particular, we seek to meet needs which cannot be fully met through the existing ITA system. Programs which currently receive ITAs should not expect to receive a group contract to simply serve more people. We seek services which fill gaps in the current workforce development system. We also seek innovative models or approaches which respond to the needs of both job-seekers and employers in today’s changing economy. The emphasis in the ARRA is on training which leads to a job; education programs are eligible only in connection with occupational skills training. Described below are allowable program types:

- ❖ **Occupational skills training** provides individuals with the specific skills needed for a particular occupation. Employers are involved in the development of curricula, and typically agree to interview all graduates and hire the most appropriate. The training incorporates basic education to meet the needs of the target population. In-depth assessment ensures enrollees are appropriate; intensive case management supports them through the program and during the job placement phase.
- ❖ **Transitional employment** models include job readiness instruction, paid employment, intensive case management and job training. The employment is typically structured as a contract between the service provider and the employer, or as a social enterprise conducted by the service provider. These models are generally used for populations lacking work experience or facing other significant barriers to employment. By definition, the outcome for a transitional employment program is placement into unsubsidized permanent employment. A high degree of employer involvement is needed to ensure that participants are acquiring the skills employers need, and that employers are ultimately willing to hire the participants.
- ❖ **Intensive, short-term GED** services for individuals who are within approximately six months of being ready for the GED qualifying exams. This is sometimes referred to as “**fast-track GED**”, and typically targets those who need to pass one or two subject-matter tests, or who may need a quick general brush-up in all subjects.

While they are preparing to take the exams, students are also receiving career counseling and engaging in job-search. To be funded under this RFP, services must be sufficiently intensive (at least 20 hours per week), must incorporate computer literacy, and must have an employment focus. The next step must be placement into a job or into a training program leading to a job.

- ❖ ESOL instruction in the context of an industry or occupation, a model often referred to as **“English for employment”**. This model combines general English conversation, grammar, reading and writing with workplace terminology in a particular field, computer literacy, resume writing, and interviewing skills. Students become conversant in the language, culture and expectations of a workplace. Job shadowing to enhance the contextualized learning experience is often a component of this model. Participants engage in job-search and receive career counseling; the next step upon graduation is placement into a job or a program leading to a job.

## **A. Required program elements**

### **1. Recruitment**

Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal an understanding of the target population they have chosen and how to engage it. Appropriate participants can be identified via the city’s one-stop career centers, public housing developments, community based multi-service agencies, community development corporations, community health centers, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, regional re-entry centers and economic assistance programs. Applicants must be capable of executing a comprehensive recruitment strategy for the target population, and must show how the strategy they propose will lead to the desired level of enrollment.

### **2. Assessment**

In order to ensure participants are successful and receive adequate services, a thorough assessment of the prospective participant is essential. Staff expertise in areas relevant to the target population will add particular value to the assessment process. Applicants should explain how they assess potential participants, and why their assessment protocol improves the service model. Intake and assessment should flow into and directly inform case management and the delivery of services. Individuals found to be unready for the program must be referred to appropriate services. Attendance and conduct policies must be discussed with the participant at the time of the initial assessment. Termination policies must be consistent, clearly defined and publicized in writing.

### **3. Case management**

A clear case management strategy for a coordinated response to participants’ needs is essential to their success. This begins with the development of an individual service plan

based on a thorough assessment of the individual's assets, aspirations and future plans. The plan must be jointly developed with the participant, and regularly reviewed by the service provider team and the participant. The plan should have clearly-stated education, employment and career goals, with projected start and end dates for all activities. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how case management is integrated into their service model. Effective case management should have the capacity to assist and empower participants to overcome multiple barriers to success, including but not limited to scheduling difficulties, transportation problems, child care issues, and motivational concerns. Case managers monitor participant attendance and performance, problem-solving as necessary.

#### **4. Contextual learning**

The purpose of this initiative is to prepare low-income and/or unemployed individuals for employment. Programs are required to utilize a contextual model which combines academic and technical proficiencies, developing basic skills and job skills simultaneously. The program models described in the previous section achieve this integration by design. For example, an "English for employment" program addresses both academic and technical proficiencies by contextualizing ESOL in the workplace. How this integration is achieved is not prescribed, but all training programs must have a basic skills component, and all education programs are required to have an employment orientation. Placement into permanent employment is the ultimate outcome, but positive outcomes can also include placement into programs leading to jobs.

#### **5. Employer Partnerships**

A strong employer partnership is critical in any successful training venture. In a true partnership, the training provider offers services of genuine value to the employer. Training providers should be able to reduce hiring and training costs for their employer partners, as well as eliminate some of the risk employers assume in hiring decisions. In return, effective employer partnerships add real value to a training program. Employers should be involved in the tailoring of training designs to meet industry needs and standards. Employers can also guarantee interviews for graduates, and help training providers and participants understand their industry's HR practices. Training providers must have a Memorandum of Agreement with at least one employer.

Education providers are required to have a Memorandum of Agreement with at least one training provider to whom they will be referring graduates. Agreements with career centers are also encouraged; education providers are not required to have Memoranda of Agreement with employers, but are expected to have some relationship with the employers they are helping to prepare people for.

## **V. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

In addition to the academic and vocational goals outlined in your proposal, programs will be expected to achieve positive outcomes for at least 75% of those enrolled in the program. For occupational skills training providers, this means placement into a training-related job, at an average wage of at least \$12.62 per hour, with 30-day retention. If, because of your target population, you anticipate placement rates or wages below these levels, you must provide a clear and compelling explanation as to why these performance standards should not apply to your program. Education programs are expected to place at least 75% of those enrolled into programs leading directly to a job. Placement into a post-secondary program is a positive outcome only if the post-secondary program can be shown to lead directly to employment. Education programs funded under this RFP will also be subject to educational advancement outcomes determined during the contract negotiation process.

## **VI. PROGRAM MONITORING/REPORTING/BILLING**

The Office of Jobs and Community Services will conduct site visits to monitor for compliance with the contract and quality of services. This includes:

- Achievement of objectives in accordance with proposal and contract;
- Integrity of administrative systems and eligibility determination; and
- Quality assessment through observation and informal interviews.

These monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities and operations. Applicants should note that accurate determination and documentation of WIA eligibility is complex and time-consuming. Participants who are not adequately documented as WIA-eligible will not count towards your outcome measure.

Participant files must contain the following:

1. copy of the participant's intake form and all eligibility documents
2. appropriate working papers (work permit or education certificate)
3. all assessments, pre and post program
4. record of attendance and documentation of activities where appropriate (workshop or activity attendance record, etc.)

JCS will be using the state Division of Career Services MOSES database for its WIA contracts. The MOSES database will be used for contractors to enter data, update client progress, report outcomes, run reports, and any other aspects of our MIS needs. Agency staff will be trained in MOSES and certified by DCS in order to access the database.

Contracting agencies must be capable of accessing the Internet with a computer capable of displaying data 800x600. Communication speed must be equal to or better than a DSL link.

JCS will provide the necessary software to effect the hookup through JCS to the state system. Each funded organization is also expected to provide its own anti-virus protection.

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to perform administrative responsibilities including: maintaining records of participant eligibility, attendance and progress; managing a participant tracking system in compliance with the MOSES management information system; and submitting program reports and invoices at regular intervals. Billing under federal grants is complex, requiring dedicated staff time, which should be reflected in your budget.

## VII. TERMS OF PROCUREMENT

Responses to this RFP must be received by JCS **no later than 4:00 p.m. on July 13, 2009**. JCS is located at 43 Hawkins Street, Boston, 02114. Late proposals will not be accepted. Faxed or e-mailed applications will not be considered. We strongly encourage applicants to deliver their applications in person. Submit one signed original and five copies of your proposal. Attach a copy of your most recent agency audit to the signed original only.

A **letter of intent** (see page 3 of this RFP) is required by June 26th, 2009. JCS may ask applicants to submit written clarifications to their proposals, and may conduct site visits during the procurement process. **A bidders' conference will be held on June 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Rabb Lecture Hall of the Copley Library (700 Boylston Street). Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to attend.**

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the proposal, congruence with the goals of this RFP, past program performance, geographic distribution of services, and service to target populations. The narrative portion of the proposal (not counting the budget narrative) must be **no more than ten pages**, single-spaced, in 12-point font. Point values are allocated to each section of the proposal narrative as follows:

Program Summary (one single-spaced page):	10 points
Organizational Capacity:	15 points
Understanding of Target Population:	10 points
Program Design:	40 points
Staffing and Administration:	10 points
Budget and Budget narrative: (not counted in 10-page limit)	15 points

These values are an evaluation tool; they do not dictate which proposals are ultimately recommended for funding. JCS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive or modify any requirement contained in this RFP, to modify or amend without consult any proposal, and to effect any agreement deemed be in the best interest of the city and its residents.

Contracts will be for a 12-month period. In issuing contracts, JCS makes no commitment for refunding, but reserves the right to refund programs based on the availability of funding, program performance, organizational capacity, administrative responsiveness, and service to target populations.

All questions regarding this RFP should go to [ken.barnes.jcs@cityofboston.gov](mailto:ken.barnes.jcs@cityofboston.gov)

## **VIII. PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS**

The original (signed) proposal must be submitted along with 5 copies. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all copies are complete. Only the original need contain your agency's audit/financial information.

The proposal narrative must be single-spaced in 12-point font. The narrative may not exceed 10 pages. This page limit does not include the budget, the budget narrative, or any required forms or attachments.

The narrative should follow the order and format of the Proposal Guidelines section, which begins on the following page.

Proposals must be delivered no later than **4 PM on Friday, July 13<sup>th</sup>** to:

**Office of Jobs and Community Services**

**Planning Department**

**43 Hawkins Street, Boston, MA 02114**

The office is located near City Hall, behind the Area A police station and the Channel 7 building. It is within walking distance of the Government Center and Bowdoin subway stations. Parking in the vicinity of the office is limited. Allow extra time if you are driving.

### **Proposal Contents List**

Your proposal should contain the following items, in this order:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet (see appendix)
2. Proposal Narrative
3. Budget Forms (see appendix)
4. Budget Narrative
5. Memoranda of Agreement with Employer(s)
6. Curriculum outline
7. Program schedule
8. Job descriptions and resumes

## **IX. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

### **1. Program Summary**

On one page, single-spaced, 12-point font, describe your proposed program, including specific target population, number of participants, program site(s), start and end dates, industry/employers and positions to be trained for, educational and employment outcomes, and other key features such as support services, internships, etc. Identify any partners with whom you will collaborate to offer key components of the design. Describe briefly how your program would contribute to the recovery and reinvestment effort, and how it fills a gap in Boston's workforce development system.

### **2. Organizational Capacity**

Briefly describe your organization's work within the past two years involving low-income and unemployed populations. Describe your experience and expertise in the following areas:

- Occupational skills training, adult literacy instruction and integrated curricula
- Job development and placement
- Post-secondary placement
- Counseling, case management, and post-placement services

Provide performance outcomes (enrollments and outcomes, including training-related job placements for occupational training programs) for these services. Please provide a reference EDIC can contact regarding your organization's administrative capabilities.

### **3. Understanding of Target Population**

Please describe the characteristics and needs of the specific population you intend to serve. What are the challenges and opportunities for these individuals? How does this population reflect the priorities of this RFP? How many are low-income adults? How many are dislocated workers? What direct experience have you had with this population and how did you accommodate their needs? Which aspects of your program are designed specifically to address the challenges faced by this population?

### **4. Program Design**

Describe in detail your proposed design for offering each of the following required components: recruitment, assessment and evaluation, counseling and case management,

education/training, and job development and placement. Explain how these functions are appropriate for your target population and its needs.

A. Recruitment:

Discuss your plan for recruitment, including the specific target group you will recruit, the neighborhoods they live in, the organizations and audiences with which you will communicate, and the tools and methods you will use. How large a pool of recruits will you need to bring into your intake process in order to identify the cohort of enrolled participants you propose to serve? How will WIA eligibility be determined?

B. Assessment and Evaluation:

Describe the initial assessment process you will use to determine individuals' academic and vocational needs and to develop an individual learning plan for each participant. Identify the specific skills assessed and the tools used. Describe how you will work with the individual to reach agreement on the plan and make modifications as necessary. What happens to individuals who are found to be unready for your program? How will you know if your participants are attaining the appropriate competencies?

C. Counseling and Case Management

Discuss your organization's counseling and case management systems, including the range of services participants will receive through case management, and how you will maintain a strong, effective presence for participants during the assessment, training and follow-up periods. Who will provide case management? How often? What system do you use for documenting, tracking and sharing case management information?

D. Training and Education:

Discuss your goals, objectives and methods for instruction in occupational training and basic educational skills development. Append curriculum outlines for each instructional component and a daily or weekly schedule of program activities. Please explain your approach to the integration of basic and vocational skills. Use examples from your curricula to illustrate how students will learn or strengthen cognitive and technical skills in context.

E. Employer/Training Provider Involvement:

TRAINING PROVIDERS: List the employers you are targeting for placement of your graduates. Identify the specific job titles (with wages) for which your participants will be competing, with a description of each job. Provide a timeline for the process and timing of your job development and placement activities. Discuss in detail the ways in which your partnership(s) with employer(s) will contribute to the success of your instruction, job development and placement efforts. Clearly define the roles and

activities of the participating employer(s). Discuss the ways in which employer involvement has contributed to your curriculum and design to make them more closely linked to the skills required by the industry and job(s) for which you are training. Attach a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between your organization and the participating employer(s) outlining the activities, responsibilities and contributions of the employer(s). The MOA must be signed by the CEO of each organization or a designee who has the most senior operational authority for the area of employment covered by the program.

**EDUCATION PROVIDERS:** If your program outcomes include placement into a training programs, describe how that program will lead participants directly to employment. Attach a Memorandum of Agreement with one or more such programs, signed by the CEO of each organization or a designee who has the most senior operational authority for the program in question. Provide a timeline for the process and timing of your placement activities. Discuss in detail the ways in which your partnership(s) will contribute to the success of your instruction and placement efforts. Clearly define the roles and activities of the partners. Describe how the involvement of your partners has contributed to your curriculum and design to make them more closely linked to the skills required by employers.

## **5. Staffing and administration**

Please identify the staff members responsible for this program, briefly describing their experience and qualifications. Identify the staff who will manage the participant tracking system. Attach job descriptions and resumes for all positions involved in the project, noting whether they are to be funded or provided in-kind. Identify which staff and/or functions are direct service and which are administrative. Label the job descriptions with the name of the staff person, or indicate if the position is vacant. Briefly describe your ability to quickly implement this program if funded, including securing space, staffing, etc.

## **6. Budget**

**1. Budget forms:** Using the forms and instructions provided, prepare a detailed 12-month budget to cover all aspects of the project. Include costs for all components (recruitment, assessment and evaluation, classroom instruction, other instructional components as appropriate, counseling, job development and placement, client tracking, project oversight and administration, fiscal management and oversight, and reporting).

**2. Budget narrative:** Prepare a budget narrative describing every line item and identifying clearly how each has been calculated.