

CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
FOR**

Anti-Violence Community of Practice



**CHICAGO COOK
WORKFORCE
PARTNERSHIP**

Project Period: Winter 2018 – Winter 2019

**CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP
69 W. WASHINGTON – SUITE 2860
CHICAGO, IL 60602**

RESPONSES DUE:

Wednesday October 25th, 2017 before 4:00pm (CT)

Bidders Conference Webinar: October 13th, 2017 3:00 pm-4:00 pm

Online Bidders Conference link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/915311749>

**** Attendance is not mandatory, but is highly encouraged ****

**Karin M. Norington-Reaves, CEO
Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership**

**Dr. Kenneth Ender, Co-Chair
Chicago Cook Workforce Investment Board**

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SECTION I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

Project background

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership is committed to improving the conditions faced by the area's African-American and Latino youth through quality workforce, education and supportive services. Chicago and Cook County are home to a large concentration of disconnected/opportunity youth who are African-American and Latino youth and face staggering homicide and crime rates. A January 2016 report¹ found that over 40% of African-American young adults and nearly 19% of Latino or Hispanic young adults, ages 20-24, are "opportunity youth" - out of work and out of school. These rates exceed both Illinois and US rates for the same populations. Cook County's large number of such youth is both a symptom of, and contributing factor to, the economic conditions and rates of violence in the county's high-need neighbourhoods.

While the issue of neighbourhood violence is complex and requires multiple interventions, most would agree that some young adults engage in criminal activity due to a lack of other economic options. Young adults, especially those who are African-American or Latino and live in impoverished conditions, often do not have access to the resources and support they need to pursue viable careers. Many lack the basic skills and experience required for employment. They also face additional barriers to obtaining jobs, including social prejudice, lack of social networks, and limited access to transportation or proper work attire. Further, exposure to violence results in trauma and, in some cases, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues. These youth need significant support to overcome these challenges and thrive in the workplace.

While many of these youth face significant barriers to employment, they also possess the capacity to make significant contributions to the workplace, their families and communities if they are provided with the necessary support and training. Numerous institutions and programs exist to provide education and workforce services to opportunity youth, but few systematically acknowledge and effectively respond to the critical social issues facing the area's young people. To assist youth and the community in realizing the untapped potential of disconnected young adults, workforce development organizations must be equipped with the necessary strategies and tools to address the violence and trauma young people are exposed to on a daily basis.

The new legislation for the nation's largest source of workforce development funding, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), focuses on young people that are out of school and out of work ("opportunity youth") and increases the eligible age range from 21 to 24 years. Furthermore, WIOA prioritizes high-need youth populations, including those subject to the juvenile or adult justice system. WIOA presents an opportunity to fundamentally change the way The Partnership's network of youth agencies identify, recruit, and serve youth participants.

Historically, agencies operating Workforce Investment Act funded programs have been challenged with meeting stringent performance measures while also fulfilling time consuming administrative functions. Many agencies utilize an eligibility and suitability screening process that requires youth to attend multiple appointments and produce official eligibility documents that are often hard to

¹ University of Illinois Chicago Great Cities Institute, January 2017, *Lost: The Crisis of Jobless and Out of School Teens and Young Adults in Chicago, Illinois, and the U.S.*

obtain before they can become enrolled and receive services. These processes often result in higher need youth self-selecting out. Some agencies express a strong desire to serve youth who are involved in the criminal and juvenile justice systems but feel that they do not have adequate resources to do so effectively. The intake process inherently selects youth who are self-motivated. While these youth also face barriers and are in need of help, many of the highest need young adults remain disconnected. Given that WIOA represents the largest source of federal funding, it is critical that The Partnership and its network of agencies increase the number of justice-involved youth served by the system.

Project Description

With generous support from JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership seeks to create and facilitate an Anti-Violence Community of Practice with a subset of youth Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) delegate agencies. The Anti-Violence Community of Practice (AVCP) will serve as the vehicle to disseminate and implement the strategies and skills necessary to effectively serve youth involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems and/or impacted by violence. Through this Request For Qualifications (RFQ), The Partnership will select up to 10 agencies to develop a collaborative model for improving workforce services through a trauma informed care lens. The Partnership will convene the organizations on a monthly basis to participate in a series of formal trainings which will be facilitated by contracted training partners, as well as members of the Community of Practice.

The Partnership will engage the selected agencies to finalize objectives of the group and to identify training topics. The Partnership anticipates that the AVCP will cover the following topics

- Incorporating trauma-informed practices in all facets of youth programming through a partnership with a trauma-informed care expert. The trauma expert will provide individualized assistance to each agency to implement a trauma-informed care organizational culture and will conduct formalized group trainings. Trauma Informed Care is an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma. It emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety for both consumers and providers, and helps survivors rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.
- Identifying and screening for mental health and substance abuse issues, and learning about community resources for mental health and substance abuse
- Providing comprehensive and holistic wrap-around services
- Effective outreach strategies and intensive case management
- Restorative justice and facilitating peace circles
- Working effectively with various justice institutions including: the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, Juvenile Probation and the Cook County Jail.

The AVCP will complete the project with a profound understanding of the issues affecting Chicago's youth impacted by violence, including both perpetrator and victims of violence. Through this collaborative learning process organizations will be fully equipped to better address the violence epidemic that currently plagues our city and county.

The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership

The Partnership's mission is "to create, promote, and effectively manage a network of workforce development organizations that: designs innovative solutions to address business needs, and, prepares individuals for, and connects them to, career opportunities." Annually, we administer over \$60 million of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other funding and manage a network of over 50 delegate agencies, including 10 high-volume American Job Centers. The Partnership oversees additional funding for special projects serving youth. The Partnership funds over 30 community-based organizations to provide youth with training, career coaching and other supportive services to help them attain education and employment goals.

SECTION II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Eligible Respondents

Respondent must be a currently funded **out-of-school youth WIOA agency** in good standing with The Partnership.

Entities are **ineligible** if they: 1) are currently barred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by a Federal or State department/agency; 2) have existing grants with any State, City or County agency that are suspended or otherwise not in good standing; or 3) are not in compliance with the Illinois Department of Revenue or the Federal Internal Revenue Service requirements.

SECTION III. QUALIFICATIONS SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submission Deadline

THE DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS IN RESPONSE TO THIS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS IS Wednesday October 25th, 2017 4:00 pm CST. Qualifications received after the due date and time may be deemed NON-RESPONSIVE and therefore subject to rejection.

Submittal Procedure

All proposals should be physically submitted to Illona Sheffey-Rawlings, CAO/General Counsel at 69 W. Washington, Suite 2860, Chicago, IL 60602 according to the following rules:

- **A maximum of 3 pages**
- **8 1/2 x 11 letter size paper**
- **One inch margins**
- **1.5 spaced**
- **Minimum 11-point font**

In addition, **AGENCIES MUST** submit electronically to gmartinez@workforceboard.org AND srivera@workforceboard.org in either Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format.

Questions

Respondents are strongly encouraged to submit all questions and comments related to the RFQ via e-mail to gmartinez@workforceboard.org. The **deadline for questions is October 18th, 2017 4:00 pm CST.**

Schedule of Events

Release of RFQ	October 3 rd , 2017
Online Bidders Conference	October 13 th , 2017
Deadline for Questions	October 18 th , 2017
Qualifications Due to The Partnership	October 25 th , 2017
Interviews with Potential Candidates	Winter 2017
Announcement of Selected Partners	Winter 2017
Community of Practice Launches	January 2018

SECTION IV. SUBMISSION QUESTIONS

The qualifications narrative must provide specific detailed responses for the items listed below in a **maximum of 3 pages**. Spell out acronyms for technical terms upon first use in the narrative.

1. Please describe your organization’s experience during the last five years working with young adults, 16-24, impacted by violence and/or the justice systems. If agency has little to no experience working with the population, please describe your efforts to engage youth impacted by violence and/or the justice system. **Up to 25 points based on organization’s proven track record working with the target population and/or efforts to work with the population.**
2. Please describe your organization’s current capacity to serve this population (staff qualifications, current youth programming, trainings completed, referral partnerships, internal resources, etc.). **Up to 25 points based on organization’s past efforts to better serve the target population.**
3. Please describe what your organizational needs are in order to better serve youth participants who are impacted by violence and/or the justice systems. **Up to 25 points.**
4. Please identify the staff who will participate in the AVCP (up to 5 staff per agency can participate in formal trainings, and a minimum of one staff person in a position of leadership is expected to attend all monthly sessions). Please describe your capacity to commit to the yearlong project. **Up to 25 points based on planned commitment to project, including identification of management staff person.**

Criteria	Point Value
Organizational History and Experience	25
Past Efforts Serving Youth Populations	25
Organizational Need	25
Staff Capacity and Commitment	25
Total Points Available	100

SECTION V. SUBMISSION REVIEW PROCESS

A panel of workforce development professionals selected by The Partnership will review and evaluate all proposals. Panel members may include Partnership staff, foundation officers, and/or other City and State agencies. The panel will perform an in-depth review of the proposals based on the review criteria.

The Partnership will then identify high-scoring respondents based on the quality of the proposal submitted. Selected respondents will be interviewed by The Partnership before a final selection is made. Selected respondents will be required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with The Partnership and will be offered a \$5,000 stipend for participation in the AVCP. The stipend is intended to offset the staff and travel costs associated with participating in training and meetings. The stipend will be paid in one installment at the end of the 12 month p[roject period.