

Greater New Bedford Youth Council **Request for Proposals**

FAQ Sheet

1) Does the Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board (WIB), at the time the RFP is posted, know the total amount of funding that will be made available for programming?

The WIB/Youth Council does not know what its WIA allocation will be at the time that the RFP is posted. Generally, the total allocation is known by the time RFP's are due to the board.

2) What is the target for vendors in terms of number of youth served?

The number of youth served varies across vendors. Pilot programs tend to serve 10-20 youth due to new and innovative programming, while more established programs tend to serve significantly more youth. It is important to point out that a programs "cost to serve" rate is important and given considerable focus during the evaluation process.

3) Do programs need to provide all 10 WIA elements in-house?

All potential contractors must ensure that their program makes available or provides access to all 10 program elements required for youth programs under WIA. Potential vendors are strongly encouraged to leverage existing relationships, or build new relationships, with community agencies/programs which can provide services that meet the 10 WIA element requirement as opposed to providing all internally. Potential contractors must document their ability to provide these services, or include a letter from referral agencies that will provide these services. All youth must be provided with case management services, the level and intensity of which will be based on individual need. While every youth may not need all program elements to meet their educational/employment goals, all ten (10) required elements listed below, must be in the service plan and made available to participants as needed.

4) When will individual bidder awards be made?

Though it varies slightly from year to year, the Youth Council collects proposals the third week of April and then provides copies to readers. Reader comments and evaluations are then provided to the Youth Council Planning Committee by the third week of May. Decisions are made shortly there after.

5) Can proposers submit a proposal in partnership with one or more organizations?

Yes, it is strongly encouraged.

6) What is the age span for ISY services?

Taken from page 17 of the RFP:

"The target population is: low-income individuals between the ages of 14 and 21 who have one or more of the following deficiencies:

- Deficiencies in basic literacy skills (individual youth who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below grade level 8.9)*
- Homeless, runaway, or a foster child*
- Pregnant or a parent*

- *An offender, and/or*
- *An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment (one or more grade levels below their age-appropriate grade level; has a disability, including a learning disability; or faces a series barrier to employment as defined by the Youth Council and the WIB.)*

Program design should reflect an age appropriate continuum of services that generally plans for the needs of youth aging through the program, with flexibility that allows for the needs of individual youth. Therefore, 14-15 year old youth should remain connected to the system through adolescence with the understanding that the relationship of the youth to the system will change as they age. This could be reflected in the intensity and method of delivery of services provided. This continuum of services must include the ten program elements required by law. As youth become older, work readiness and employment may become the primary emphasis. Older in-school youth ought to be placed in private sector summer employment connected to career interests, with WIA and/or other funds used to perform the “intermediary” or connecting activity function. For youth who begin their WIA supported services at 14 and 15 and continue services as they age, high school graduation can mark the beginning of follow-up services. This can be followed by building post-secondary educational and training linkages for these better prepared youth, or assisting youth to take advantage of employer relationships built over the course of their schooling.

7) In regard to the 10 required elements for youth services specified in the RFP, how much time must a mentor devote to a youth enrolled in the program?

The mentoring should be of 12 months in duration. There is not a specific amount of time per week/month, but the intent is that it be a one-on-one special relationship with individualized attention. The expectation is that the mentor will encourage and work with the youth in order to meet his or her goals as specified in the individual service strategy.

8) Can a mentor work with more than one youth?

This is permissible, as long as the mentor works one-on-one with each individual youth.

9) Is mentoring part of the follow-up activity under the contract?

It can be, however, in the New Bedford area, the New Directions Southcoast Youth Department is responsible for follow-up activity.

10) Are incentives for attendance and participation (such as school granting credit for participation in after-school activities) allowable?

Yes. Potential vendors must include the incentives in their proposals (and in proposed budget if the incentive has a cost), and the incentive would have to be approved as part of the vendor’s youth services contract.

11) Is there an acceptable or recommended cost per participant?

The cost per participant is not specified. The cost for any one participant would depend in part on the youth’s individual service strategy. The median cost per participant in Massachusetts is \$3,425 for OSY and \$2,625 for ISY. In the New Bedford area, the cost ranges from

approximately \$900 to \$3000 per participant. We would encourage planning and providing services in a manner that results in a reasonable and competitive cost.

12) Is there a budget cap, whether as a dollar amount or a percentage of the contract, on salary for in-house staff or costs for contracted staff?

There is no cap on staff salaries; however, hours of staff have to be justified.

13) Is there a budget cap on administrative costs?

There is no cap on admin, however proposals will be reviewed with respect to cost effectiveness.

14) Are vendors contracting under these two RFP's responsible for recruiting youth into their program(s)?

New Directions Southcoast, Inc. is primarily responsible for recruiting youth. In-School program application process begins on April 1st; applications are limited and available at the Career Center only. Vendors may refer youth to the Youth Program but each applicant for the In-School programs must complete the application process by April 30th to be considered for enrollment.

New Directions Southcoast, Inc. out-of-school program has open enrollment and vendors are encouraged to refer eligible youth to New Directions Southcoast, Inc. New Directions Southcoast, Inc. is responsible for intake services and eligibility determination. The New Directions Southcoast Youth Department will refer eligible youth to vendor(s) appropriate to each individual youth's needs.

15) What party/parties are responsible for initial TABE testing and assessment?

The New Directions Youth Department is responsible for initial TABE testing as part of the overall assessment process for each youth. Vendors working with the youth are then responsible for quarterly testing using U.S. Department of Labor approved tools/methods.

16) Are new or pilot youth services programs encouraged, especially pilot programs for specific target populations?

You may submit a proposal for a pilot program according to the requirements of the RFPs, and we would encourage innovative program proposals. However, the Youth Council is not setting aside funds as a specific dollar amount or percentage of the available WIA youth funds specifically for pilot program(s).

17) Is there currently a specific youth services program needed that is not being addressed?

There is a need for more services for youth who have lower basic skill levels (for example, lower level reading skills). There is also a need for ESOL training for youth. Programs, especially OSY programs, which have a strong relationship with employers, are a priority.

18) Would a vendor be held responsible for meeting performance standards in these basic skills level or ESOL?

Yes.

19) When preparing a proposal, is it acceptable to change margins on the Proposal Specifications Form or Budget Sheet? Is there a particular font required?

You may change margins. You may use your preferred font. The RFP and Proposal Specification Form have been designed to facilitate the process of proposing programs. Each item in the Proposal Specification Form has a corresponding section in the Statement of Work, Section IV, which will help the contractor to complete the form. Please retain the lettering and numbering of sections as they appear in the Statement of Work and Proposal Specification Form.