

2014 Economic Development Request for Application

Scope of Work

1. INTRODUCTION

The overall objective for this competitive solicitation is to establish contracts with community-based organizations for short-term and long-term career and occupational training, based on the local needs for labor that are determined by industry growth and occupational demand, in an amount not to exceed \$1,280,650 per 12-month period.

Contracts entered into under this Request for Application (RFA) are anticipated to be for an initial three-year period, beginning October 1, 2015, with three one-year renewal options for a total contract period not to exceed six (6) years. All contracts awarded through this solicitation will require authorization of the Austin City Council. The City Council has directed that final contract decisions be consistent with the goals of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan.

The initiatives of the Economic Development Department (EDD) include creating jobs in Austin that provide employment opportunities for unemployed, underemployed and “hard to employ” residents of the City of Austin and Travis County. Through this solicitation, EDD seeks to assist individuals enter the local labor force and/or increase their income to become self-sufficient and enrich their quality of life. This solicitation also seeks to align immediate industry needs for skilled individuals and future employment opportunities for the unemployed, underemployed and “hard to employ” population through career and occupational training.

This Scope of Work is intended to describe the relationships between industry, career and occupational training providers and the targeted populations. The contracted services will target individuals who are residents of the City of Austin and/or Travis County with gross family income at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines.

The City seeks to provide training for skills associated with high-demand occupations that address immediate and future labor force demands, determined by industry needs, input from industry professionals and supporting market data. To that end, the City of Austin (City) seeks applications in response to this RFA from qualified providers (Applicants) with demonstrated experience in providing career and occupational training to persons with diverse needs and backgrounds. The \$1,280,650 available through this RFA will be divided into two categories and distributed within a range of \$100,000 to \$200,000 for short-term career and occupational training and \$1,000,000 to \$1,200,000 for long-term career and occupational training.

2. BACKGROUND

The Economic Development Department (EDD) has supported career and occupational training by providing over \$1.2M per fiscal year for Social Service contracts through the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department for workforce development programs. EDD has also stimulated labor force development through direct departmental economic development initiatives to enhance economic development incentive agreements and instill Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills and career opportunities.

A Labor Force Ready for Modern Industry

Austin’s economic competitiveness has been supported by a capable labor force ready to engage in the on-going venture of creating a dynamic, innovative city. Through this

2014 Economic Development Request for Application

Scope of Work

solicitation, EDD seeks to continue the development of a local labor force to maintain Austin's competitiveness and to provide Austinites an opportunity to fully enjoy the benefits of a strong, growing economy. The Austin technology sector alone is projected to create 9,000 jobs in the next three years, and skilled, local workers are crucial to sustain the pace of the city's economic engine.

Like other cities in Texas and the United States, Austin is facing a widening skills gap between available jobs and the workforce. Educational attainment and training levels are insufficient to meet the trends for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields as well as worker certifications. The situation is critical for Austin's long-term economic success. With an under-educated workforce, Austin may become less attractive to businesses, and may see a decline in businesses selecting to expand or locate in Austin for talent acquisition. Associated tax revenues from businesses could decrease not just the City of Austin, but also Travis County, the healthcare district, the community college district, and school districts.

Austin's population is diverse, and is forecasted to continue this trend. EDD sees Austin's diversity as a strength and intends to engage traditionally underrepresented populations in Austin's local labor force to fill jobs, specifically those jobs that require certifications and/or degrees and increasing their wages in the process. The growing Hispanic population is particularly important in this regard: Hispanics currently account for 35% of Austin's population, yet they only represent up to 22% of the STEM labor force (and when healthcare practitioners and technical occupations are excluded, representation declines to 9%). At the same time, the Austin African American population continues its steady decline from 15% of the total population just a few decades ago to 8.1% today. Providing STEM education and training to the African American community could help engage this population in area job opportunities to retain the diversity of the Austin area in the decades to come.

This RFA: The Labor Force Connection to the Overall Economy

The Austin economy depends on both a capable labor force and self-sufficient individuals not dependent on government or public assistance. This Economic Development RFA also recognizes the need to empower the current labor force with modern skills and engage hard-to-employ populations as a meaningful part of the economy.

As the social and economic environment changes, the City will strive to invest in career and occupational training services that focus on the needs of growing industry and the ability to promote Austin as an economically competitive location for business attraction and expansion, while also providing opportunities for self-sufficiency to targeted individuals and families.

3. PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE & GOALS

3.1 Economic Development Department Goals:

- a. **Economic Development Partnership:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to develop a relationship with EDD and its allies for business recruitment and expansion efforts. These relationships must be centered on a plan that will engage these allies for their expertise in reaching and communicating the needs of a diverse business base, as well as a diverse audience of potential target participants. Economic Development allies include, but are not limited to the following organizations:

2014 Economic Development Request for Application Scope of Work

- i. Austin Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
 - ii. Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable
 - iii. Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce
 - iv. Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce
 - v. Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
 - vi. Greater Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
 - vii. Minorities for Equality in Employment Education Liberty and Justice
 - viii. Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
 - ix. Travis County Criminal Justice Planning
- b. **Market Knowledge for Labor Force Capacity and Trends:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to perform primary and secondary data collection and analysis and report this information on a regular basis. Such research provides insight into the local labor market and trends regarding labor force assessment.
- c. **Market and Labor Force Connection:** The Applicant will provide data to demonstrate the need for the strategy/strategies being proposed. Data must include but is not limited to:
- i. Industry growth and labor needs assessment
 - ii. Career and Occupational demand and alignment with trainings provided
 - iii. Client demographics
 - iv. Community need
 - v. Self-sufficiency: This RFA aligns with the Health and Human Services Social Service RFA, particularly with these self-sufficiency goals:
 - 1. Transition Out of Poverty: Ensure developmental, educational, employment and other special opportunities for disadvantaged persons to further self-reliance.
 - 2. Enrichment: Encourage personal development and community enrichment through cultural and educational programs
- d. **Service Experience:** The Applicant will provide:
- i. a comprehensive overview of the organization and provide information that describes the organization's experience in providing industry-related career and occupational training on a short-term and/or long-term basis. ;
 - ii. a detailed description of courses and services it has previously offered which relate to the goals of this RFA;
 - iii. a comprehensive description of the application process used for participant enrollment; and
 - iv. a comprehensive description of its proposed program breadth/scope, program budget, staffing plan, and cost per client served per desired outcome.

3.2 Industry-Based Goals for Career and Occupational Training:

- a. **Industry Input:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to develop relationships with industry groups that allow regular input regarding labor needs, concerns and feedback related to overall performance of the training programs developed and deployed for their respective industry segment.

2014 Economic Development Request for Application

Scope of Work

- b. **Employer Engagement:** The Applicant will provide information that exhibits the organization's ability to develop one-on-one relationships with employers to better understand their needs for labor, training, and labor force recruitment and retention.
- c. **Industry-based Services:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability analyze and synthesize all of the collected information to provide career and occupational training in the following areas:
 - i. **High Demand Occupations:** Training for occupations in which collected data yields current or immediate labor needs, which provide opportunities for job placement and advancement.
 - ii. **Targeted Occupations:** Training for future labor needs and occupations that would be a result of the City's focus for proactive efforts in business recruitment and expansion:
 - 1. The expansion of local businesses and the recruitment of technology-based manufacturing and logistics industries.
 - 2. Targeted industry sectors as defined by EDD and the Opportunity Austin program.
 - 3. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) related careers.
- e. **Speed of Business:** The Applicant will provide information that exhibits the organization's ability to engage with industry and address needs by developing and offering curriculum in short-term and long-term time intervals.

- i. **Short-term Career and Occupational Training to Address Immediate Needs:**

By way of working with EDD and utilizing the EDD's contracts with allies for business recruitment and expansion, companies look to enter or expand in the local market. Depending on circumstances, the company(ies) may need to realize their ability to develop a specialty-skilled labor force from the local labor market in a very short period of time. The company may be more inclined to locate their expansion if local training providers can demonstrate the ability to create a customized training curriculum for rapid labor force development needs, building a pool of trained individuals eligible for employment within a one to three month period.

Due to the short-term nature of the program, the Applicant should provide an intensive instruction program. Participants should exit the program with the skills and appropriate certifications to help ensure that they stand a good chance of being hired immediately following the program. And, the Applicant should demonstrate its ability to provide soft skills such as resume writing, winning strategies for interviewing, and effective communication.

Applicants are expected to create relationships with EDD, EDD's allies to demonstrate the ability to develop this type of customized training curriculum. The Applicant will provide information that exhibits the organization's ability to engage with industry and address needs by developing and offering short-term curriculum that delivers immediate labor needs within one to three months.

The total funding that is available through this RFA for short-term career and occupational training will range between \$100,000 and \$200,000.

2014 Economic Development Request for Application

Scope of Work

- ii. **Long-term Career and Occupational Training to Address Future Needs:**
The overall purpose should be to provide a long-term engagement program for individuals in order to improve the education and labor-market outcomes for the Austin area. The Applicant should focus on high demand occupations that have a minimum starting wage of at least \$17.00 per hour.

Due to the long-term nature of the program, the Applicant should provide an extensive enrollment process that helps to ensure individuals who are selected to participate in the program stand a good chance at completing the program. And, the Applicant should demonstrate its ability to provide support services to individuals in order to ensure successful completion and to reduce the likelihood those individuals will resort to student loans to complete the program.

By way of working with EDD, Applicants are expected to provide labor force development services that coincide with the City's overarching plan to grow and sustain a competitive economy through industry diversification and business expansion. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how it is that they will flex their relationship with industry leaders, other organizations and/or focus groups to collect information regarding industry development related to new technologies, growth, and the resulting next wave of high-demand occupations.

The Applicant will provide information that exhibits the organizations ability to engage with industry and address needs by developing and offering long-term curriculum that delivers future labor needs within two to four years.

Further, Applicants will be expected to overlay this information with that of industry sectors being proactively targeted by EDD and its allies efforts for business recruitment and expansion.

The total funding that is available through this RFA for Long-term career and occupational training will range between \$1,000,000 and \$1,200,000.

3.3 Return on Investment Goals:

Economic development investments in short-term and long-term career and occupational training programs are intended to benefit the overall Austin economy by focusing on targeted participants who do not possess the skills or education levels to fully contribute or fully derive benefit from the robust Austin economy. Typically, these participants who do not possess the skills or education cannot advance their employment and are marginalized by lower wages. Further, the lower wages put these participants in a predicament whereby the participants rely on government services, including welfare, food stamp, and school meal voucher assistance.

- a. **Targeted Participation:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to provide services that are tailored to and provided to individuals that are prepared to enter or re-enter the labor force as a competitive candidate for living wage employment. These individuals include but are not limited to:

2014 Economic Development Request for Application

Scope of Work

- i. Unemployed individuals seeking employment
- ii. Underemployed individuals seeking advancement
- iii. Individuals with a high school diploma or GED
- iv. Individuals with some post-secondary education but not a formal degree or certificate
- v. Individuals with disabilities
- vi. Veterans
- vii. Single parents with minor children
- viii. Individuals with criminal histories
- ix. Residents of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and other housing programs funded by City of Austin Health and Human Services Department (HHSD)
- x. Individuals who are employed through the City of Austin's Day Labor Center
- xi. Individuals served by other HHSD social services contracts
- b. **Participant Eligibility:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to provide training and education that will cater to those with a family income at or below 200% of poverty.
- c. **Participant Outreach:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's capacity for actively promoting programs and career/occupational opportunities to the targeted participants; strategically generating interest and enrollment.
- d. **Participant Assistance [applies to long-term career and occupation training program Applicants only]:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to provide support services that will encourage target participants' enrollment by removing or reducing entry barriers and allowing the participant to remain enrolled in the program until completing the curriculum.
- e. **Occupational Placement:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to place participants in high demand careers and occupations.
- f. **Occupational Wages [short-term career and occupation program]:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to place participants in careers and/or occupations that pay at least \$11 per hour.
- g. **Occupational Wages [long-term career and occupation program]:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's ability to place participants in careers and/or occupations that pay at least \$17 per hour.
- h. **Employee Retention:** The Applicant will provide information that demonstrates the organization's capacity to provide follow-up services to those individuals that have completed the training curriculum to ensure that the participants will have a mentor to share or overcome any new employment concerns.,

3.4 Leveraging and Health Service Environment Goals:

Bonus consideration will be given to Applicants who demonstrate the ability to secure additional in-kind and/or monetary support from employers, philanthropic individuals and/or organizations, and state and federal agencies. Bonus consideration will also be given to Applicants who create a healthy service environment for their clients, visitors, and staff.

- a. **Leveraging:** The Applicant will provide an overview of the organization's capacity and experience for leveraging public dollars to generate additional investment from

2014 Economic Development Request for Application Scope of Work

employers, philanthropic individuals and/or organizations, and state and/or federal agencies for career and occupational training programs.

- b. **Healthy Service Environment:** Applicants are encouraged to establish and enforce a tobacco-free worksite policy that promotes tobacco-free living. Applicants are encouraged to actively promote and support breastfeeding by employees and maintain a written worksite lactation support policy that is regularly communicated to employees. Applicants are encouraged to develop a comprehensive Employee Wellness Initiative that promotes nutrition, physical activity, tobacco-free living, and the mental health of employees. And, Applicants are encouraged to provide a safe environment for working and conducting business that includes zero tolerance for behaviors and addressing behaviors that are threatening or violent in nature.

4. CONNECTION TO IMAGINE AUSTIN

Successful Applicants will indicate how proposed strategy/strategies correspond to the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan complete vision statement and one or more of its core vision components. Imagine Austin identifies a host of policies that it terms “building blocks” and then groups them under “priority programs” to narrow a path toward implementation. Applicants will benefit from understanding that this RFA is part of the implementation of priority program #3: “Continue to grow Austin’s economy by investing in our labor force, education systems, entrepreneurs, and local businesses.”

The Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement

Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

Core Components of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan Vision

Several core vision components specifically relate to investments in social services. These key vision components and supporting points may be viewed at <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/imagine-austin-vision>. Particularly relevant are (note these are in a redacted form):

Austin is Livable: All residents have a variety of urban, suburban, and semi-rural lifestyle choices with access to quality schools, libraries, parks and recreation, health and human services, and other outstanding public facilities and services.

- Austin’s diverse population is active and healthy, with access to locally-grown, nourishing foods and affordable healthcare.

Austin is Educated: Austin provides everyone with an equal opportunity for the highest quality of education that allows them to fully develop their potential. Networks of community partnerships support our schools and ensure that our children receive the resources and services they need to thrive and learn.

- Our school campuses provide safe and stable environments enabling future success.
- Every child in Austin has the chance to engage with other cultures, communities, and languages, providing pathways for healthy development and the critical thinking skills students need as future citizens of Austin and the world.

2014 Economic Development Request for Application

Scope of Work

Austin is Prosperous: Austin's prosperity exists because of the overall health, vitality, and sustainability of the city as a whole — including the skills, hard work, and qualities of our citizens, the stewardship of our natural resources, and developing conditions that foster both local businesses and large institutions.

- Equitable opportunities are accessible to all through quality education, training, and good jobs.

Austin Values and Respects its People: Austin is its people. Our city is home to engaged, compassionate, creative, and independent thinking people, where diversity is a source of strength, and where we have the opportunity to fully participate and fulfill our potential.

- People across all parts of the city and of ages and income levels live in safe, stable neighborhoods with a variety of affordable and accessible homes with access to healthy food, economic opportunity, healthcare, education, and transportation.

Implementation of Priority Program #3

This RFA is part of transforming vision into reality through implementation. Applicants may want to consider referencing metrics to help demonstrate the capacity of a proposed strategy for implementation. Applicants may want to consider such metrics as:

- Employment rate and average wages by age, geography, and race/ethnicity
- Total number and percentage of Austin skilled labor force compared with the region
- Working wage.

5. REPORTING

All Applicants must include the following high-level outcome.

- Percent of individuals who maintain or increase income

Additional high-level outcomes designed to demonstrate progress in the relationship between industry, Applicants, and the targeted population will also be required for all applications. Additional outcomes may also be proposed, if applicable.

- Percent of employer partners offering jobs to participants
- Percent change in high demand occupations as a result of programming
- Percent of individuals that obtain employment
- Percent of individuals who gain employment in high demand occupations
- Percent of participants earning at least \$11.00 per hour [short-term program]
- Percent of participants earning at least \$17.00 per hour [long-term program]
- Percent of participants receiving health care benefits as part of their wage package.

All applications must include all of the following outputs. Additional outputs may also be proposed.

- Number of unduplicated participants served per contract year
- Number of unduplicated participants served during the initial 36-month contract period
- Number of employee partners
- Average hourly wage of participants who become employed after training

2014 Economic Development Request for Application Scope of Work

Return to the Economy

Applicants must report on their interaction and program development for targeted industries, targeted occupations and the targeted participants. Reporting will include, but is not limited to the following metrics that meet economic development goals of industry driven career and occupational training:

- a. The direct connection between occupational demand, program development and targeted participants entering these occupations;
- b. The participants career pathway for sustainability;
- c. The benefit or growth related to the industry or the individual company(ies) as a result of the training efforts;
- d. The return calculated for the investment and resources used during the process of assisting these individuals.

Independent Evaluation and Research

Applicants funded through this RFA will be required to provide annual reporting conducted through independent evaluation and research related to performance measurements of the programming and participation outlined in this RFA. Applicants are required to include and delineate the cost for such reports as a component of the response. Applicants are encouraged to refer to studies regarding the outcomes and impacts for participants in community-based career and occupational programs. Applicants are also encouraged to describe existing or planned relationships with an independent evaluation or research organization(s) and how this relationship will be utilized to provide metrics for Return to the Economy.

Recognition of City Contribution

When Applicant speaks to the career and occupational training programs funded by through this contract, Applicant will recognize the City of Austin at the highest sponsor-level category assigned to the value of this contract. The Applicant will use the City of Austin logo and confer upon the department all benefits given to other sponsors in this sponsor level. This recognition includes events, presentations, marketing materials, newsletters, multimedia, print materials, or any other form of communication.

6. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

The eligibility guidelines for this RFA are outlined in Section 0610 – City of Austin Health and Human Services Department Client Eligibility Guidelines. The City requires all awarded agencies to maintain a complete and current record of client eligibility throughout the entire contract period (e.g. client file or electronic record) that includes documentation of the elements listed in Section 0610.

Applicants may propose alternate eligibility criteria from the guidelines in Section 0610 for the proposed target population(s). If applicable, Applicants shall clearly define the proposed alternate eligibility criteria and make a case for the need for alternate criteria. Alternate eligibility criteria may or may not be accepted if the Applicant is awarded funds under this RFA.

Applicants shall describe how the City of Austin Health and Human Service Department Client Eligibility Guidelines (Section 0610) or the proposed alternate eligibility criteria will be documented for the target population(s) identified in the application.

2014 Economic Development Request for Application Scope of Work

7. FUNDING INFORMATION

- a. \$1,280,650 is available per 12-month period for a total three-year amount of \$3,841,950.
- b. The \$1,280,650 available through this RFA will be divided into two categories and distributed within a range of \$100,000 to \$200,000 for short-term career and occupational training, and distributed within a range of \$1,000,000 to \$1,200,000 for long-term career and occupational training.
- c. Applicants shall apply for a minimum of \$50,000 per 12-month period.
- d. The initial funding period will be October 1, 2015, through September 30, 2018.
- e. It is the City's intent to provide an initial three-year contract with three (3) one-year renewal options, for a total contract period not to exceed six (6) years.
- f. The City of Austin reserves the right to adjust the contract amount or scope of work over the contract period based on community needs, Applicant's ability to expend funds in a timely manner or any other factor. When the City determines adjustments need to be made, the City will provide at least 90-day notice to the contractor.

8. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- a. Any nonprofit or governmental agency that can legally contract with the City (as verified by the City Purchasing Office) Is eligible to apply for this funding.
 - i. City policy does not permit entering into a contract with an entity that owes taxes to the City.
 - ii. The Applicant and its principals may not be currently suspended or debarred from doing business with the Federal Government, as indicated by the United States General Services Administration list of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs, the State of Texas, or the City of Austin.
- b. Applicants shall be able to meet the City's insurance requirements for social service contractors. See the insurance requirements in Section 0400 of the RFP.
- c. Applicant shall be able to obtain a Fiduciary Bond if a contract is awarded in the amount of the proposed application.
- d. Applicant's two most recent audit years:
 - i. Shall reflect an unqualified opinion
 - ii. Shall not reflect a "Going Concern Uncertainty"
 - iii. Shall not reflect financial management issues unless Applicant can provide evidence that necessary changes have been implemented.
- e. Applicant's Board of Directors shall:
 - i. Have specific terms with beginning and ending dates
 - ii. Meet in person a minimum of three times per fiscal year
 - iii. Have a process to review program performance, approve budgets, and review financial performance.
- f. Within the last five years, the Applicant shall have a minimum of two years of successful experience working with target populations and providing proposed services to clients.

All Applicants must submit the following documents in a sealed envelope in the same package as their application:

- a. Completed Threshold Review Checklist (Section 0605)
- b. Current Board of Directors by-laws
- c. Approved Board of Directors minutes during the previous fiscal year reflecting the Board has a process to:

2014 Economic Development Request for Application Scope of Work

- i. review program performance
 - ii. approve budgets
 - iii. review financial performance
- d. Copy of the most recently filed 990 or 990-EZ form
- e. A complete set of audited financial statements to include the auditor's opinion and any management letters, covering the two most recent audit years
- f. Completed Non-Suspension or Debarment Certification Form (Section 0805)

DRAFT