

## Request for Quotes: Business Services Support Contractor

### Background Information: What is an Industry Partnership?

An industry partnership convenes businesses from the same region and industry, empowering them to work collaboratively to define key challenges, priorities, and goals. The workforce development board either directly or indirectly through contractors provides administrative functions, such as coordinating meetings and managing communications, so that employers are free to focus on sharing ideas, generating solutions, and identifying opportunities. The industry partnership receives ongoing assistance from its Regional Support Team, a carefully selected group of partners representing the workforce development, economic development, and education sectors. These partners bring resources, expertise, and capacity to help design and execute solutions, ensuring that businesses are supported at every step.

Industry partnerships place businesses in the driver's seat. This means that individual businesses are asked to play an important leadership role, whether championing the partnership by recruiting additional members, lending their expertise, or serving on an action team focused on addressing a challenge. Partner4Work coordinates the convening of these leaders in an effort to understand the issues in their respective industry and strategize on the solutions to those issues.

The public workforce system most traditionally engages in "business services." These services include the publicizing of available positions, recruitment and referral of potential candidates for available positions, and the coordination of job fairs to educate the public about the availability of jobs and resources. In the context of Industry Partnerships, business services refer to the application of solutions to the issues identified through the Industry Partnership's work. These services are often similarly transactional in nature and may include targeted talent recruitment sourcing/matching in partnership with PA CareerLink®

Currently, Partner4Work is organizing businesses in eight high-priority industries including manufacturing, construction, healthcare, information technology, retail & hospitality, transportation & logistics, public sector & education, and finance. Industry Partnerships (IPs) will convene businesses from the southwestern Pennsylvania region in the industries, empowering employers to work collaboratively to define key challenges, priorities, and goals. These IPs will help ensure that the greater Pittsburgh region's public workforce system is most beneficially meeting the needs of employers and the un/underemployed.

To build capacity in building and sustaining IPs, Partner4Work is soliciting applications for at least one **Business Services Support Contractor**. This provider will assist Partner4Work with its IP partnerships as outlined in the Statement of Need and Attachment A: Partners and Roles below.

### Who We Are

Partner4Work is the workforce development organization that connects funding, expertise, and opportunities to develop a thriving workforce in the Pittsburgh region. Formerly the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board, Partner4Work operates a comprehensive portfolio of programs supporting workers and businesses, including our core WIOA and TANF programs: PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, a proud partner of the American Job Center Network; Allegheny County EARN program, and year-round youth programs. Through collaboration with 100+ partners, Partner4Work connects more than 60,000 adults and more than 8,000 young adults to training and employment opportunities each year. To better meet the needs of both the un/under-employed and

employers in Pittsburgh/Allegheny County region, Partner4Work is currently in the process of launching eight industry partnerships.

### Statement of Need

In 2018, Partner4Work instituted eight new industry partnerships (IPs) based on labor market information that demonstrated a need for more workers/talent in the Pittsburgh/Allegheny County region. Through these industry partnerships, Partner4Work can ensure that the public workforce system delivers a true supply-demand model of services. Partner4Work's strategic employer engagement includes but is not limited to the following services:

- Host conversations with industry leaders to learn industry needs including but not limited to talent sourcing, incumbent training, and anticipated future disruption prevention.
- Engage industry leaders as IP members. IP membership includes continuously engaging in reviewing and vetting relevant training programs to ensure that the public workforce system is meeting their expectations.
- Determine IP members forecasted short-, medium-, and long-term hiring needs.
- Strategically increase IP member engagement as specific industry leaders become more engaged in the public workforce system through the system with a managed care process. Increased employer engagement may include activities such as posting jobs or hosting recruitment fairs.

The Business Services Support Contractor will play a major role in coordinating these services with industry partners in the eight key industries across southwestern Pennsylvania. Additionally, the Business Services Support Contractor will collaborate closely with Partner4Work staff and IP-specific Regional Support Teams, carefully selected groups of community partners representing the workforce development, economic development, and education sectors that provide on-going assistance to a specific IP. These partners bring specialized resources, expertise, and capacity to help design and execute solutions. (Please see Attachment A for more information about each partner's roles and responsibilities.)

**Partner4Work is seeking a least one business services contractor that has a strong knowledge of the key industries outlined above to more fully integrating business needs into the public workforce system, as described below.** The successful applicant will have the capacity and expertise to plan and execute an effective strategy for coordinating services between employers and PA Careerlink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County. The successful applicant will also have a proven ability to collaborate with non-profit, government, and industry partners to achieve outcomes.

### Required Applicant Qualifications

- Proposals will be accepted from any of the following: individuals, private for-profit agency, private non-profit organization, government agency, or educational institution that can demonstrate the capacity to successfully provide the services identified in this RFQ.
- As a provider of business services in Allegheny County, the selected applicant(s) will actively participate with Partner4Work in shaping and informing the local workforce development system. As such, the selected applicant(s) will demonstrate strong relationships with area businesses within the targeted industry(ies). The provider will also demonstrate knowledge of and expertise in:
  - Federal, state, and local policies, including WIOA and its implementing guidance;
  - Local labor market information, including workforce and employer dynamics.

## Required Project Activities

- Work under the direction of Partner4Work to coordinate with its public workforce system partners, including but not limited to the PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, and other selected partners.
- Lead strategic business service efforts on behalf of Partner4Work to create an inclusive fast-paced system that responds to the needs of industry in real time.
- Provide additional capacity to the Partner4Work Industry Partnership Team through the following:
  - Identifying and networking with key local employers and industry experts.
  - Conducting business outreach including but not limited to cold calls, networking, and following up with potential leads.
  - Meeting directly with employers and/or facilitating connections to the appropriate Partner4Work staff or external partners for meetings.
  - Assessing employer needs including but not limited to identifying employer challenges and potential opportunities.
  - Documenting conversations with employers.
  - Making warm hand-offs to the appropriate Partner4Work and/or workforce development partner staff to follow-up with next steps.
  - Providing input and guidance to Partner4Work Leadership and Industry Partnership Developers on development and expansion of Industry Partnerships, including but not limited to identifying shared needs and priorities of specific industry sectors, sharing relevant research and business intelligence, helping design meeting agendas, helping to shape strategies for industry partnerships.
  - Supporting outcomes tracking by identifying what success indicators are important to track for specific employers and industry partnerships, conducting follow-up with employers to identify the results of their engagement with the public workforce system.
  - As needed, plan and deliver business services in close partnership and coordination with Partner4Work staff and contracted providers.
- Adjust service delivery and other program components based on feedback from Partner4Work.
- Be responsive to functional leadership at PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County and supportive of all its programs, functions, and operations or other service delivery sites.

## How to Apply

Quotes must be submitted by **11:00 PM on July 18, 2019**, to [industrypartnerships@partner4work.org](mailto:industrypartnerships@partner4work.org). Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered. Proposals should contain the following information:

1. **Cover Sheet** – Use template provided
2. **Executive Summary** (1-page maximum) that includes an overview of your qualifications, including the number of years you have successfully provided business services, the type of services provided, your experience supporting the key industries outlined in the statement of need, and your capabilities to quickly develop strong employer connections throughout southwest

Pennsylvania;

3. **Capabilities Overview** (1-page maximum) that describes each of the following:
  - a. If applicable, basic organizational description, including but not limited to the year established, legal status, governance structure, mission, principal programs and services, executive leadership, annual budget, and the number of full-time staff.
  - b. Experience in managing quality business services programs similar in size and scope to that required by this RFQ, including but not limited to businesses served, services and activities delivered, contract values and related performance outcomes.
  - c. Administrative and fiscal capacity, including but not limited to your proven ability to provide fiscal support and oversight, utilize information systems, manage resources and personnel, and produce timely and accurate program reports.
  
4. **Program Narrative** Describe each of the following for your proposed program approach: (limit 5 pages)
  - a. **Business Services:** Describe your proposal for effectively delivering business services to employers, including how you will accomplish each of the following. (Highly rated responses will clearly demonstrate how the proposed program components connect employers to the workforce system):
    - i. Providing excellent customer service to employers, including the method of identifying their needs, offering appropriate, value-added services, and follow-up.
    - ii. Developing industry-specific strategies that align with the city's priority areas and other Partner4Work investment priorities.
    - iii. Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with area employers that mutually benefit customers and employers.
  - b. **Connecting Employers to appropriate Partner4Work staff and/or external partners:** Describe your plan for effectively connecting employers to the public workforce system, including how you will accomplish each of the following:
    - i. Process for assessing business' commitment to sustainable employment practices.
    - ii. Develop an effective process for communicating employment opportunities to Partner4Work staff.
  - c. **Communication with Partners:** Your ability to develop and maintain effective and positive working relationships with partners both within and outside of the workforce system is critical. Describe how you will establish and maintain productive connections with Partner4Work, PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, and other key workforce development partners. Include specific examples of partnerships with agencies you have worked with that provide services and supports beneficial to both customers and employers, including your process for identifying such partners, integrating them into your program model and connecting them to your efforts. Highly rated responses will include letters of support from partnering organizations, which can be attached to your proposal.
  
5. **Budget:** Total program budget may not exceed **\$149,999.00**. Please note that although Partner4Work will consider awarding more than one award to multiple Business Service Providers that specialize in one or more key industry(ies), Partner4Work is committed to providing high-quality business services to all eight high-priority industries. Thus, if Partner4Work chooses to

make multiple awards, it will distribute the total award amount (\$149,999) across multiple providers to ensure that each of the eight industries has at least one business service provider and that each individual industry’s needs will be met.

- a. Budget for all program-related and administrative costs. All costs must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary according to applicable federal, state and local regulations, including but not limited to the Uniform Guidance. Effective budgets will enable the proposed program to meet the intent and requirements of the contract, while being realistic, reasonable and prudent, avoiding unnecessary or unusual expenditures.
- b. A narrative that justifies the budget and describes the purpose and calculation of each line item. The extent to which a respondent can meet performance objectives while minimizing indirect and profit costs will be a factor in the evaluation process.
- c. Describe any leveraged or in-kind services or donations, including cash contributions, fee-for-service or other revenue generation, and in-kind contributions. List the source and dollar value of each leverage resource, as well as the role it plays in the program.

### Review and Selection Process

Partner4Work will review proposals according to the required content described in the How to Apply section with attention to clarity, completeness, and quality. High scoring proposals will clearly demonstrate an ability and likelihood to meet the standards and intended outcomes of these programs. Scoring for the required sections of the proposal will be assigned as follows:

Proposal Review Scoring Rubric	
Cover Sheet	Required, but not scored
Executive Summary	Required, but not scored
Organizational Overview	30
Program Narrative	50
Budget	20
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

### Timeline

Partner4Work aims to operationalize business services by the end of Summer 2019. The estimated timeline may be subject to change.

- Release of Request for Quotes July 8, 2019
- Proposals Due July 18, 2019 (11 PM)
- Selection July 23, 2019
- Contract Start Date July 29, 2019

## Questions?

We welcome your questions and look forward to hearing from you. All questions or requests for additional information must be made in writing to [industrypartnerships@partner4work.org](mailto:industrypartnerships@partner4work.org). Answers will be posted at [www.partner4work.org](http://www.partner4work.org) to make them available to the public and ensure a fair and transparent process.

## Disclaimers

- This Request for Quotes does not commit Partner4Work to award a contract.
- Partner4Work may make funding decisions based on the initial proposal received, without discussion of the proposal with the applicant. Accordingly, each proposal should be submitted on the strongest terms that the bidder can submit to Partner4Work.
- Partner4Work retains the right to request additional information from any applicant, before a contract award.
- No costs will be paid to cover the expense of preparing a proposal or procuring a contract for services or supplies.
- All data, material, and documentation originated and prepared by the bidder pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to the Partner4Work and be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, Right to Know Law, or other applicable legislation.
- The contract award will not be final until Partner4Work and the successful applicant have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement. Partner4Work reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. No activity may begin prior to final Partner4Work approval of the award and execution of a contractual agreement between the successful applicant and Partner4Work.
- The submission of the proposal warrants that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFQ are not in excess of those that would be charged any other individual for the same services performed by the applicant.
- Applicants are advised that most documents in the possession of Partner4Work are considered public records and subject to disclosure. Partner4Work reserves the right to issue additional RFQs if and when it is in Partner4Work's best interest to do so and, may elect to negotiate and issue multi-year contracts to successful bidders under this or subsequent RFQs. Partner4Work reserves the right to fund portions of a proposal or to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part. Rejection of a portion of a proposal does not necessarily negate the entire proposal.
- All programs and activities are designated as equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact staff to request assistance with access to this RFQ.
- Please note that requirements contained in this RFQ may change based on revised local, state, and federal rules. Therefore, proposers will be required to make staffing and programmatic modifications to accommodate the changes throughout the life of the agreement.
- The selected contractor(s) will be required to supply evidence of appropriate licenses, insurance, relevant internal procedures, etc., prior to contract execution. The list of required documentation will be provided by Partner4Work upon selection through the RFQ process. Partner4Work, in soliciting requests for proposals, shall not discriminate against any person or organization(s) submitting a response pursuant to this Request for Proposal because of race, color, creed,

religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnic group, national origin, or other basis prohibited by law.

## Appendix A: Partners and Roles

Partner Roles and Responsibilities	
<b>Partner4Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate regional Industry Partnerships in the following key industries: manufacturing, construction, healthcare, information technology, retail &amp; hospitality, transportation &amp; logistics, public sector, education, and finance.</li> <li>• Set policies and establish outcomes to support each IP.</li> <li>• Serve as liaison to participating employers</li> <li>• Direct fund development strategies and initiatives</li> <li>• Oversee local recruitment efforts</li> <li>• Procure and monitor sub-contracted program provider(s)</li> <li>• Advise on sourcing of key business services staff</li> <li>• Evaluate program and report outcomes</li> <li>• Organize and identify partners for the Regional Support Team or for IP program expansion</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Support Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give on-going assistance and expertise in the workforce development, economic development, and education sectors.</li> <li>• Provide awareness of services and opportunities within the workforce system and enhancing partnerships and relationships with area agencies that bolster workforce development efforts.</li> <li>• Collaborate, coordinate and establish strong referral relationships with the stakeholders and initiatives that comprise the larger workforce development and social service systems in Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, including other service providers and the PA CareerLink® System.</li> </ul>
<b>PA Careerlink® Title I Providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit and serve un/underemployed individuals in the Pittsburgh/Allegheny County region through job readiness training.</li> <li>• Coordinate training efforts to reflect the needs of high priority industries.</li> <li>• Deliver customized business services to support employers with recruitment, job placement, upskilling, and retention.</li> </ul>
<b>Contracted Business Services Provider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct business outreach including but not limited to cold calls, networking, and following up with potential leads.</li> <li>• Meet directly with employers and/or facilitate connections to the appropriate Partner4Work staff or external partners for meetings.</li> <li>• Assess employer needs including but not limited to identifying employer challenges and potential opportunities</li> <li>• Document conversations with employers.</li> <li>• Make warm hand-offs to the appropriate Partner4Work and/or workforce development partner staff to follow-up with next steps.</li> <li>• Provide input and guidance to Partner4Work Leadership and Industry Partnership Developers on development and expansion of Industry Partnerships, including but not limited to identifying shared needs and priorities of specific industry sectors, sharing relevant research and business intelligence, helping design affecting meeting agendas, helping to shape strategies for industry partnerships.</li> <li>• Support Industry Partnership outcomes tracking by identifying what success indicators are important to track for specific employers and industry partnerships, conducting follow-up with employers to identify the results of their engagement with the public workforce system.</li> <li>• As needed, plan and deliver business services in close partnership and coordination with P4W staff and contracted providers, including PA CareerLink Title I Providers.</li> </ul>