Request for Proposals

Training Program Services:

Vocational Skills Training Programs for Adult Learners in the Public Workforce System

Program Year: 2023

Release Date: June 17, 2022

Bidders Conference: July 6, 2022 at 1pm

Proposals Due: Submissions will be accepted, and proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis through July 25, 2022, at 5PM ET

Submission Details

Applications must be submitted electronically, with the subject line "Vocational Skills Training Programs for Adult Learners in the Public Workforce System" to the contact listed below:

Contact: Hillary Shayne, Manager, Training and Upskilling

E-mail: VSTraining@philaworks.org

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Vocational Skills Training Programs for Adult Learners in the Public Workforce System

Summary: Philadelphia Works solicits proposals from entities seeking to operate cohort-based, vocational skills training programs for adult career seekers in the public workforce system. Eligible training programs should: **(1) lead to an industry-recognized credential; (2) incorporate seamless pipelines for graduates that lead to employment and job opportunities; (3) prepare learners to be competitive candidates in one of the** Recovery Occupation **categories** *(reference Appendix A for full list).*

Note: Proposals that culminate in only basic certifications or certificates of completion will not be considered for review. Examples include ServSafe®, OSHA, MOS, or Customer Service/Retail related credentials.

Introduction & Context

Philadelphia Works, Inc., the city's workforce development board, is a non-profit, quasi-public organization serving employers and connecting career seekers to employment and training opportunities. We invest public resources in a variety of workforce solutions that drive economic growth, influence the public workforce policies, and optimize funding and resources to build a skilled and thriving workforce. For more information, please visit philaworks.org.

Our Mission: To develop and manage smart workforce solutions that respond to business needs and increase economic opportunity for all Philadelphia residents.

Our Vision: A thriving Philadelphia workforce, a stronger local economy.

As the city's workforce development board, Philadelphia Works is responsible for investing public workforce resources and managing a network of employment and training services designed to build a skilled, thriving workforce and meet regional business needs. This network – PA CareerLink® Philadelphia – connects Philadelphia residents to current job openings and career growth opportunities, while also supporting businesses in finding and retaining qualified talent.

In response to current economic and social challenges in the greater Philadelphia region, Philadelphia Works has developed an organizational training investment strategy with an emphasis on the following goals:
1. Adopting an industry-driven investment strategy informed by labor market data and ongoing feedback from employer partners.
2. Adopting a population-based approach, ensuring investments are made in programs designed specifically to meet the unique needs of populations with barriers to employment.
3. Streamlining contracting processes and more closely tying funding with program quality.
4. Attracting a broader, higher quality set of training programs through procurement.

Building a Skilled and Thriving Workforce

About Our Industry-Driven Investment Strategy

Philadelphia Works is committed to investing in training programs that are informed by employers and industry and are customized to specifically prepare students for open positions with an employer partner. Drawing from labor market data analysis and feedback from employer partners across the region, Philadelphia Works has identified a set of high growth occupations to guide training investments for Philadelphians. By following this analytical process, Philadelphia Works aims to better prepare career seekers for both short and long-term career advancement, job security in in-demand occupations, and sustainable wages that increase over time. Philadelphia Works is committed to investing in vocational training that prepares learners for one of our identified recovery occupations.

Philadelphia Works recovery occupations are those that meet the following criteria:

- On the High Priority Occupations List, Or Worthy of Petition;
- $15/Hr.+ Median Wage;
- Minimal impact to employment during pandemic;
- Local labor supply gap or opportunities;
- Strategic focus on **middle-skill and low-skill** jobs with opportunity for advancement; and
- Strategic focus on timely jobs requiring less than an associate degree to connect career-seekers to employment or earn and learn opportunities now.

For a full list of Recovery Occupations, see Appendix A.

Over the course of the next fiscal year, Philadelphia Works will periodically release additional Requests for Proposals for vocational training programs aligned with recovery occupations.

About Our Investment in Populations with Barriers to Employment and Academic Success

Philadelphia Works is equally committed to investing in training programs that incorporate best practices for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly for learner populations with long-standing barriers to academic success. Inclusive best practices include the following:

- Incorporating one-on-one academic supports for struggling learners;
- Setting expectations through orientation and/or bridge programming;
- Offering coaching, professional mentorship, and/or graduate alumni programs;
- Contextualizing literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills throughout the program;
- Embedding essential and professional skills and competencies through the classroom culture;
- Providing supportive service funding for expenses including transportation, technology equipment, etc.

Purpose

Philadelphia Works solicits proposals from entities committed to operating cohort-based, vocational skills training programs for adult career seekers (18 years and older) in the public workforce system. This RFP seeks to procure for programs catered to participants in one of two publicly funded workforce programs coordinated through the PA CareerLink® Centers: (1) Employment Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) program and (2) Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) program. All program participants must attend orientation and complete the eligibility processes through a PA CareerLink® Center before starting training.

Cohort-based vocational training programs should provide for a supportive learning environment for career seekers to pursue an industry-recognized credential with a group (i.e., cohort) of PA CareerLink® customers working toward the same goal. VST program providers work hand-in-hand with PA CareerLink® Center staff to provide for a comprehensive career counseling program including a smooth, supportive enrollment and education experience for prospective and current learners.

In this round of FY23 procurement for vocational training, **eligible training programs must lead to an industry-recognized credential and prepare learners for success in one of the Recovery Occupations** *(see Appendix A).* Due to existing programs and current data trends**,** respondents can submit proposals for any recovery occupations **with the following exceptions**: Cooks, Restaurant; Warehouse Associates; Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers; Surgical Technologists; Orderlies; Paralegals and Legal Assistants; Pharmacy Technicians; Phlebotomists; Real Estate Sales Agents; Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel; Social and Human Service Assistants; Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers; Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants; Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists; Computer Network Support Specialists; Computer Systems Analysts; Construction Laborers; Customer Service Representatives.

Applicant Eligibility

Philadelphia Works intends to award contracts to multiple respondents. For-profit and non-profit organizations with a demonstrated track record in providing training services that lead to an industry recognized credential are encouraged to apply. Specifically, Philadelphia Works seeks providers that also have served participants who may have had challenges to obtaining employment. Respondents must submit proposals aligned with one of the Recovery Occupations explained above. For a full list of Recovery Occupations, please reference Appendix A.

Please note that respondents can submit proposals for any recovery occupations **with the following exceptions:** Cooks, Restaurant; Warehouse Associates; Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers; Surgical Technologists; Orderlies; Paralegals and Legal Assistants; Pharmacy Technicians; Phlebotomists; Real Estate Sales Agents; Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel; Social and Human Service Assistants; Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers; Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants; Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists; Computer Network Support Specialists; Computer Systems Analysts; Construction Laborers; Customer Service Representatives.

This RFP is open to both current Philadelphia Works contractors as well as qualified providers that have not previously contracted with Philadelphia Works. Respondents may submit proposals for multiple training programs, but each program must be submitted separately for consideration. Agencies that submit combined proposals will be required to resubmit before consideration.

Proposals that culminate in **only** basic certifications or certificates of completion will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. Examples are: ServSafe®, OSHA, MOS, or Customer Service/Retail related credentials. Questions regarding general certifications should be submitted to vstraining@philaworks.org.

Contract Period and Availability and Awarding of Funding

Contracts awarded will be issued for an average of twelve months, dependent upon program model, beginning in the Fall of 2023. Contract extensions are at the discretion of Philadelphia Works dependent on each provider's ability to meet defined benchmarks and performance outcomes, changes in legislation, changes in the program design, and/or continued funding.

Funding for this project is contingent upon the availability of funds. Philadelphia Works intends to award contracts to multiple respondents. Philadelphia Works seeks competitive budgets with costs per student evaluated in relation to market rate tuition and reserves the right to negotiate the costs of all services upon award selection.

The payment structure for all awarded funds will be cost reimbursement. Providers must seek approval from Philadelphia Works for costs associated with this contract. Selected providers must track and document all costs necessary to operate their program and submit these to Philadelphia Works. Providers will be expected to identify and provide monthly documentation for all costs.

Submission Review & Evaluation Processes

Submissions will be reviewed and compared alongside all proposals within an industry category. Philadelphia Works will maintain the following timeline for the submission and review:

Submission Window Opens: June 17th, 2022

Bidders Conference: July 6th, 2022, at 1pm

Submission Window closes: July 25th, 2022

Where to Submit Questions

All questions regarding development and submission of this RFP should be submitted to vstraining@philaworks.org. Answers to questions will be posted on-line at www.philaworks.org.

Evaluation of Submissions

Completeness
Submissions will be initially reviewed to verify that they are complete and consistent with the guidelines set forth in this RFP. If any section of your response is missing or illegible it will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. Submissions for trainings that do not align with the designated Recovery Occupation categories will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

Fiscal Review
Submissions will be reviewed on the proposed budget for (i) fiscal soundness and (ii) comparability to market rate tuition for similar programs. Agencies must be considered either "low-risk" or "medium-risk" on the fiscal review to be considered for funding. Additional financial documentation may be required dependent upon the final decision of Philadelphia Works.

Programmatic Review
Concurrent with the fiscal review, all submissions will be evaluated based on program quality demonstrated through the narrative section. Proposals should outline a clear program design and implementation plan that provides for the following core program elements:
- A thoughtful, proactive recruitment strategy and student selection process
- Skills or competency-based training content and high-quality course instruction
- Academic supports throughout the course, including preparation for industry-recognized credentialing assessments
- Employment preparedness and connections to industry experts and employment opportunities

Philadelphia Works will prioritize program submissions that demonstrate the following programmatic qualities:
- Organizational experience, infrastructure, and staffing required to recruit and run the proposed program
- A professionally developed curriculum with well-defined learning objectives and competencies informed by employers and industry partners
- A blend of instructional methods informed by adult learning principles
- A well-defined recruitment, enrollment, and student selection processes
- An inclusive recruitment and learning strategy designed to cater to a diverse population of PA CareerLink® Philadelphia customers
- Opportunities for students to practice skills, preferably in a workplace setting
- Demonstrated commitment and staffing infrastructure to support students in acquisition of industry-recognized credentials
- Employer relationships allowing for student exposure to industry experts, opportunities for interviewing, and potential connections to employment

Responding to the RFP

Providers are invited to submit proposals in alignment with one of the identified Recovery Occupations. Reference Appendix A for the full list of options. Providers should identify the Recovery Occupation aligned with their programs through *Attachment A: Course Summary and Recovery Occupation*

Designation Coversheet. **Please note that providers can ensure that they have identified an approved Recovery Occupation by utilizing the workflow outlined in Attachment A.**

Proposals should include seven core sections:
  i.   Course Summary and Recovery Designation Coversheet
  ii.   Program Narrative
  iii.   Program Implementation Plan
  iv.   Organizational Experience Summary
  v.   Employer Support Documentation
  vi.   Proposed programmatic budget and audit; and
  vii.   Previous Training Outcomes

Section 1: Course Summary and Recovery Occupation Designation Coversheet (Attachment A). Please be prepared to select from one of the approved Recovery Occupations aligned with proposal.

Section 2: The Program Narrative (5-10 pages) should be in an essay format and should be separated into the four sections outlined below:

1. **Course Content/Curriculum**: Describe class schedule and what students will learn including:

   - Industry-specific core competencies and skills for preparing for industry credential assessments
   - Additional competencies and skills for preparing learner for professional success. *If curriculum deliberately incorporates literacy, numeracy, or digital literacy skills, please detail in this section.*
   - Tentative curriculum syllabus with learning objectives
   - Source of curriculum (if purchased) and/or biographies for curriculum developer(s) & Subject Matter Experts, etc., if developed in-house.

2. **Instruction:** Describe how the course will be taught (instructional methods) and how these strategies will ensure student retention, credential attainment, and professional success. Include the following in your response:

   - Description of instructional methods and tools
   - Strategies for effective adult learner engagement & information retention - *if course is taught virtually, specifically address strategies for effective virtual engagement*
   - Strategies for ensuring the use of instructional practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity and reflect the diversity of PA CareerLink® learners
   - Instructor(s) biographies and bios of other relevant staff, if applicable

3. **Program Administration & Supports**: Describe the program administration elements intended to attract and support students including:

- Proactive recruitment strategies - Description should include strategies for recruiting within the PA CareerLink® Centers **and** through external avenues.
- Robust student selection and enrollment processes. Selection processes should ensure enrolled learners are "training ready" (i.e., are set-up for success in the program) while also promoting diversity and inclusivity, particularly for learners who may not have had success in previous academic environments.
- Classroom policy, structure, and culture-setting - Description should include expectation-setting for learners including policies around ongoing assessment of learner progress, attendance, tardiness, participation, etc.
- Academic supports and learner engagement - Description should include strategies for engaging learners one-on-one, supporting those who have fallen behind, and providing accountability and community for learners in virtual programs.

4. Pipelines to Employment: Describe how your organization indirectly or directly facilitates pipelines to employment for students including:
- Incorporating industry experts (including prospective employers) as workshop facilitators, lecturers, etc.
- Utilizing employer/industry experts to inform curricula
- Incorporating work-based, skill-building through shadowing, externship, internship, etc.
- Incorporating employers into student selection processes
- Ensuring employer commitments to interview and/or hire   Note: Respondents are not required to include employers committed to hiring in their proposals; however, responses that include a contracted commitment to hire at least 80% of graduates will be scored with additional points.

Section 3: Program Implementation Plan (3 page maximum): Outline a program/project implementation plan with timelines, milestones/tasks, goals, and relevant staffing for recruitment, student selection, enrollment, course instruction, and employment preparedness (at a minimum). Respondents are invited, but not required, to utilize **Attachment E** in developing this implementation plan.

Section 4: The Organizational Experience Summary (3 page maximum) should include:

- A brief description and history of your organization and its experience (a) training within the proposed career pathway category and/or (b) training adult learners with barriers to employment and academic success.
- A description of the training program if it is currently funded through other funding sources and/or graduated students in the last 3 months. *Note: Philadelphia Works will prioritize organizations with the experience and infrastructure to stand-up a cohort quickly.*
- A brief description of the staffing and resource infrastructure for managing programmatic, fiscal, and reporting requirements. Examples of previous experiences managing contracted funding from government entities.

Section 5: Previous Training Program: Summary & Outcomes (Attachment B)

Section 6: Employer Support Forms (Attachment C): Please submit a minimum of one and a maximum of three employer support forms, which should supplement pipelines to employment as described in the narrative.

Section 7: Financial Documentation

1. **Programmatic Budget (see Attachment D)**
2. **Most recent Audited Financial Statements performed in compliance Government Auditing Standards (i.e., OMB Circular A-133 or a program audit).** This should include:

- Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting on Compliance and Other Matters
- Report on Compliance with Requirements Applicable to Each Major Program and on Internal Control over Compliance
- Statements of Financial Position, Activities and Changes in Net Assets and Cash Flows
- The sign-off date of the audit and all disclosures (footnotes) Responders must also provide a copy of the organizations   management/strategic plan which must also include an allocation of expenses, processes, and trends.

APPENDIX A: COURSE SUMMARY & RECOVERY OCCUPATION COVERSHEET

ORGANIZATION NAME:		
ADDRESS:		
ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT PERSON:	**TITLE:**	
PHONE:	**EMAIL:**	
FISCAL CONTACT PERSON:	**TITLE:**	
PHONE:	**EMAIL:**	

Please complete a separate form for each training program that you are proposing.

PROGRAM TITLE		
ADDRESS OF TRAINING (IF DIFFERENT THAN ABOVE)		
LIST OF CREDENTIALS (PRIMARY, SECONDARIES)		
INSTRUCTION METHOD (ONLINE, IN-PERSON, SYNCHRONOUS, ASYNCRHONOUS)		
VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING OCCUPATION		
PROPOSED NO. OF CYCLES DURING CONTRACT YEAR	**LENGTH OF EACH CYCLE**	
NO. OF STUDENTS PER CYCLE	**TOTAL NO. OF STUDENTS IN CONTRACT YEAR**	

One Penn Center at Suburban Station
1617 J.F.K. Boulevard, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103

www.philaworks.org
215-963-2100
215-567-7171

APPENDIX B: PREVIOUS TRAINING PROGRAM – SUMMARY & OUTCOMES

Training Program Details

Please complete this form about your organization's current or previous relevant training programs dating back over the last three years. Some questions/sections will not be relevant for all applicants; complete to the best of your ability and indicate N/A as needed. To further strengthen your application, please include an alternate data report to substantiate the numbers reported below.

Program 1 Details						
Program Title						
Length of Training (hours, weeks)				**Course Dates/Timeline** (Ex: 3/2019- 7/2019)		
Associated Occupation(s)						
Credentials (Primary)				Credentials (secondary)		
Program Summary						
Instruction Method (Online, in-person, Synchronous / asynchronous)				Target Population (if relevant)		
Quantitative Numbers		**Enrolled**	**Completed**	**Credentialed within 6 mo.**	**Employed (training-related) within 6 mo.**	**Employed (training-related) through direct connection by training provider**
	No. of students					
	% of students					
Connection to Employment Supports:			**If yes, provide Details**			
Industry Exposure Opportunities		Yes/No				
Career Counseling Staff		Yes/No				
Job Placement (list major employer partners in details)		Yes/No				

Building a Skilled and Thriving Workforce

Program 2 Details					
Program Title					
Length of Training (hours, weeks)			**Course Dates/Timeline (**Ex: 3/2019- 7/2019)		
Associated Occupation(s)					
Credentials (Primary)			Credentials (secondary)		
Program Summary					
Instruction Method (Online, in-person, Synchronous / asynchronous)			Target Population (if relevant)		

Quantitative Numbers		**Enrolled**	**Completed**	**Credentialed within 6 mo.**	**Employed (training-related) within 6 mo.**	**Employed (training-related) through direct connection by training provider**
	No. of students					
	% of students					

Connection to Employment Supports:		**If yes, provide Details**
Industry Exposure Opportunities	Yes/No	
Career Counseling Staff	Yes/No	
Job Placement (list major employer partners in details)	Yes/No	

Program 3 Details					
Program Title					
Length of Training (hours, weeks)			**Course Dates/Timeline** (Ex: 3/2019- 7/2019)		
Associated Occupation(s)					
Credentials (Primary)			Credentials (secondary)		
Program Summary					
Instruction Method (Online, in-person, Synchronous / asynchronous)			Target Population (if relevant)		

Quantitative Numbers		Enrolled	Completed	Credentialed within 6 mo.	Employed (training-related) within 6 mo.	Employed (training-related) through direct connection by training provider
	No. of students					
	% of students					

Connection to Employment Supports:		If yes, provide Details	
Industry Exposure Opportunities	Yes/No		
Career Counseling Staff	Yes/No		
Job Placement (list major employer partners in details)	Yes/No		

Total Average Program Performance	Please enter student performance for any courses or programs from above.
Total number of students enrolled	
Average percent of students completing/graduating.	
Average percent of students successfully earning all primary credentials (i.e. LPN not CPR) within 6 months.	
Percent of students connected to training-related employment within 6 months.	
Percent of students directly connected to employment facilitated by provider (i.e. interview set-up by training provider).	
Total number of employers engaged through industry exposure opportunities	

EMPLOYER PARTNER INFORMATION

Employer:	
Mailing Address:	
Industry:	
Website:	
Total Number of Employees:	

EMPLOYER CONTACT*

Name		**Title**	
E-mail		**Phone**	

HIRING NEEDS

Will you have hiring needs over the next 12-18 months that you can see yourself filling with graduates of the proposed program?

If yes, how many positions:
- 1-3
- 3-10
- 10+
- Unsure

Having reviewed this training provider's curriculum, what positions within your company will motivated, qualified program graduates be able to apply for?

PROJECT SUPPORT

Do you currently work with this training provider to support students in the program? If so, how do you support the program?

Training Program Implementation			
Steps/Tasks	**Staffing/Supports**	**Time Frame**	**Notes/Details**
Recruitment/Outreach/Course Planning			
Recruitment/Outreach			
			-
Application, Selection, & Enrollment			
			-
Program Orientation/ First Week			
			-
Preparation for Employment			
			-
			-
			-
			-
Preparation for Credential Assessment			
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-