

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA  
OF EASTERN ARKANSAS**

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

for

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
ONE-STOP OPERATOR and YOUTH, ADULT,  
DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICE PROVIDER**

**Program Year July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018**

*Release Date: April 19, 2017*

## **Introduction to the Local Area**

The Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas covers a five-county local area made up of Crittenden, Cross, Lee, Phillips, and St. Francis County leaders from business, education, labor and government, with the majority of its board members representing the private business sector.

The vision of the Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas is to have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working in order to keep Arkansas's economy competitive in the global marketplace.

Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas is the Fiscal Agent, Administrative Entity, and current service provider for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

The Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas is committed to:

- Developing an efficient partnership with employers, the educational system, workforce development partners, and community based organizations to deliver a platform that will prepare a skilled workforce for existing and new employers.
- Enhancing service delivery to employers and jobseekers.
- Increasing awareness of the State's Talent Development System.
- Addressing skills gaps.

Data related to the five-county area can be found in the current Transitional Regional and Local Plan at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>

## **Technical Details**

This Request for Qualifications was prepared based upon the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) and associated U.S. Department of Labor Regulations and guidance. This Federal Law was implemented to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States. WIOA provides the framework for a national workforce preparation system that is flexible, responsive, customer-focused, and locally managed. Mandatory core program partners include: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation, along with required partners specified in the Act. Offerors are strongly encouraged to read Training and Employment Guidance Letter 04-15 issued by the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines the vision for the One-Stop system under WIOA.

The three hallmarks of WIOA include:

1. The needs of businesses and workers drive workforce solutions, and local boards are accountable for this within the communities they serve.
2. One-Stop Centers provide excellent customer-centric services and focus on continuous improvement; and,
3. The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

WIOA is built around the following key principles:

- Increase access and opportunity, particularly for those individuals with barriers to employment, to ensure success in the labor market.
- Support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system.
- Improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages, and to provide employers with the skilled workers they need to succeed in a global economy.
- Promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services to better address the employment and skill needs of workers, jobseekers, and employers.
- Increase the prosperity of workers and employers and the economic growth of communities, regions, and states, and the global competitiveness of the United States.
- Provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase the employment, retention and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants.

The Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas (Board) oversees the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds for the five-county area.

In Section 107 of the legislation and in § 678.605 of WIOA Regulations Local Workforce Boards are required to competitively procure the One-Stop Operator role and responsibilities. The Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas has contracted with an independent consultant to assist a Procurement Task Force comprised of Chief Elected Officials in soliciting and selecting a One-Stop Operator and a Title I Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Service Provider. The hiring of an independent contractor to conduct the procurement is required, as the Board may be submitting qualifications to compete for the One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider role and responsibilities.

Chief Elected Officials on behalf of the Workforce Development Area of Eastern Arkansas, with the release of this Request for Qualifications, are soliciting submittals to identify a single One-Stop Operator and Title I Service Provider for the Eastern Arkansas comprehensive and satellite One-Stop Centers:

- Arkansas Workforce Center at West Memphis (comprehensive)  
2003 W. Broadway

West Memphis, Arkansas 72301

- Arkansas Workforce Center at Forrest City (comprehensive)  
300 Eldridge Road, Suite 2  
Forrest City, Arkansas 72601
- Arkansas Workforce Center at Helena (satellite)  
819 Newman Drive  
Helena, Arkansas 72342

### ***Purpose of Request for Qualifications***

The purpose of this solicitation is to select a single service provider to serve as One-Stop Operator and Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and to lead Business Services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 for the Workforce Development Area in Eastern Arkansas.

A Request for Qualifications is being used due to the fact the Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas and the Chief Elected Officials know what is wanted from a service provider and the Board and Chief Elected Officials are looking for how a vendor responds to the requirements and experience.

### ***Background and General Information***

- A. The Board and Chief Elected Officials intend to be as inclusive as possible in this solicitation. The goal is to receive a wide variety of high quality, innovative submittals that meet the workforce development needs of the communities served in Eastern Arkansas. To ensure the integrity of the procurement process, Chief Elected Officials will participate in the review process rather than the Board due to the possibility the Board may be an Offeror to this Request for Qualifications.
- B. The resulting contract and/or agreement with the Successful Offeror will be for a one-year-period, July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. The contract/agreement may be extended annually for up to a total of four years as allowed in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. If the Board has a conflict of interest in the contract/agreement extension, Chief Elected Officials will authorize the extensions based on funding availability, satisfactory performance, and other factors determined appropriate by the Chief Elected Officials. Notice for contract/agreement renewal will be made at the start of the fourth quarter each program year. Competitive procurement is required at least every four years according to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- C. Once the award is complete, the Local Workforce Area reserves the right to modify delivery design. In the event the modification requires additional labor hours on the part of the Successful Offeror terms will be negotiated and the contract/agreement modified. The Local Area also reserves the right to de-obligate funds from the Successful Offeror if it fails to meet contractual requirements.

- D. Funding for this Request for Qualifications will vary, depending upon final allocations, number of participants to be served, services proposed and negotiated. Offerors must serve Adults, Youth and Dislocated Workers in all five counties in Eastern Arkansas. The Successful Offeror will lead Business Services and the integrated business services team throughout the five-county area.
- E. The Local Workforce Area reserves the right to make an award based on the criteria in this Request for Qualifications or to make no awards, if that is deemed to serve the best interests of the Board, Chief Elected Officials and Eastern Arkansas. The submittal process is competitive and follows government procurement rules.
- F. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 provides the framework for a national workforce preparation system that is flexible, responsive, customer-focused and locally managed. The Local Workforce Area envisions a system that meets the needs of residents and businesses alike.
- G. This Request for Qualifications is not in itself an offer for work nor does it commit the Board to fund any submittals. The Board and Chief Elected Officials are not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation or research involved in the development of the response to this Request for Qualifications.
- H. Offerors may be asked to answer questions electronically during the review process of this Request for Qualifications.
- I. All commitments made by the Local Workforce Area as a result of this Request for Qualifications are contingent upon the availability of funds and the Local Workforce Area reserves the right to award an amount less than the total funds available.
- J. The Local Workforce Area Administrative Entity assures it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 law and the related regulations; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. This assurance applies to the WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements that the Board makes to carry out the WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.
- K. By providing a submittal to this Request for Qualifications all Offerors are providing an assurance that they will comply with the above nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.
- L. Offerors should note that under the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, the contents of submittals to the Procurement Task Force are subject to public release upon request, except those items specifically exempt from disclosure. The Offeror shall mark as "proprietary" those parts of its submittal that it deems proprietary. However, the Offeror is alerted that this marking is advisory only and not binding on the Local Workforce Area. If there is a request under the Freedom of Information Act to inspect any part of the submittal so marked, the Local Workforce Area will advise

the Offeror and request further justification in support of the "proprietary" marking. If the Local Workforce Area determines, after receipt of the justification, that the material is releasable, the Offeror will be notified immediately. Under no circumstances will a submittal or any part of a submittal be released prior to the contract award decision.

- M. The Chief Elected Officials will authorize the Board to negotiate a contract and/or agreement for the provision of programs arising from this Request for Qualifications. In the event, the Board has a conflict of interest, the contract and/or agreement will be facilitated by an independent contractor and be between the Chief Elected Officials and the Board.
- N. The Successful Offeror is required to maintain a local management office within one of the comprehensive One-Stop Centers and provide detail on how each location will be staffed and managed.
- O. The Successful Offeror may not subcontract any part of the services unless approved in the Request for Qualifications process.
- P. The Successful Offeror must assure that it will provide additional services that may become necessary as a result of new grants such as National Emergency Grants or other State or Federally funded workforce programs granted to Eastern Arkansas.
- Q. The Successful Offeror must assure that it will comply with Local, State, and Federal program and fiscal monitoring requests.
- R. Offerors are prohibited from discussing this Request for Qualifications with the Independent Contractor facilitating the procurement process or Local Chief Elected Officials. Such contact will result in disqualification of the response. A question period is provided within the Request for Qualifications timeline.
- S. Offerors assure that local management will be hired who are familiar with the Eastern Arkansas five-county area.
- T. Offerors who have provided a submittal may protest the award of the contract and/or agreement according to the following process:
  - 1. Protests must be filed electronically and be received by the procurement consultant at malaw528@aol.com by June 15, 2017. All protests are public information after the protest period ends.
  - 2. All protests must state the basis for the protest in clear terms and provide an alternative the protester finds acceptable. The basis of the protest must be a violation of a State or Federal contracting law, rule, or regulation applicable to the contracting process.
  - 3. The independent consultant will forward all protests to the Chief Elected Officials on the Procurement Task Force and provide detail on whether the protests meet the above conditions.
  - 4. During any part of the review or consideration, the protester may be asked to clarify or amplify statements or to provide proof of claims or other

statements. Any such requests must be fully responded to within the time designated by the Procurement Task Force. In the event a protester fails to respond, the protest will be dismissed and no further protest will be accepted relative to this Request for Qualifications.

5. **The Procurement Task Force** will review the protest and will issue a written response that is intended as a complete and final answer to the protest. A response will be issued no later than June 20, 2017.
6. The Procurement Task Force will document the submission of a protest and the findings in meeting minutes.

U. The State of Arkansas has established statewide performance measures. Negotiated performance measures for PY 16 and 17 that will be tracked and met or exceeded by the Successful Offeror are as follows:

- Employment (2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr after Exit)
  - Adult 82.5%
  - Dislocated Worker 77.0%
  - Youth 75%
- Employment (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr after Exit)
  - Adult 78.0%
  - Dislocated Worker 74.5%
  - Youth 71.2%
- Median Earnings (2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr after Exit)
  - Adult \$5,842
  - Dislocated Worker \$6,400
- Credential Attainment Rate
  - Adult 75.3%
  - Dislocated Worker 75.0%
  - Youth 70%

## Resource Information

Potential Offerors may get helpful background information from the Transitional and Regional Local Plan provided to the State of Arkansas by the Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas. The plan can be found at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>

The United States Department of Labor has a WIOA Online Community of Practice that provides information sharing needed to implement and maintain WIOA at: <http://on.workforcegps.org>.

WIOA law and regulations can be found at: [www.doleta.gov/wioa/](http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/)

Arkansas's WIOA Combined State Plan can be found at: <http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/AWDB/pdfs/public%20comment/Draft%20State%20Plan%20for%20Public%20Comment%202-8-2016.pdf>

A copy of the current local Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement documents are available at <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>. However, these documents will be revised to meet WIOA requirements once State guidance is complete.

**RFP Timeline** *(any changes to this schedule will be communicated by posting on the website and by emailing organizations who submitted an intent to apply.*

4/19/17	Request for Qualifications Released and Posted on <a href="http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm">http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm</a>
4/26/17	Letter of Intent Due to Mary Ann Lawrence at <a href="mailto:malaw528@aol.com">malaw528@aol.com</a>
4/26/17	Deadline for Questions to Mary Ann Lawrence at <a href="mailto:malaw528@aol.com">malaw528@aol.com</a>
4/28/17	Questions and Answers Released and Posted on <a href="http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm">http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm</a>
5/19/17	Proposals Due Electronically to Mary Ann Lawrence at <a href="mailto:malaw528@aol.com">malaw528@aol.com</a>
5/30/17	Task Force Evaluation and Recommendation
By 6/10/17	Full Board or Executive Committee Approval and Chief Elected Official Approval
By 6/10/17	Award Announcement
By 6/15/17	Negotiate and Finalize Contract
7/1/17	Contract Start Date



## **Eligible Applicants**

Organizations eligible to respond to this Request for Qualifications may fall within any of the following categories:

- Governmental Agencies
- Private Non-Profit Organizations
- Private For-Profit Businesses
- Educational Entities (other than elementary and secondary schools)

## **One-Stop Operator Roles and Responsibilities**

The One-Stop Operator must coordinate the service delivery of core and required one-stop partners and other partners working with the comprehensive Workforce Centers. This includes managing partner responsibilities in the comprehensive One-Stop Centers as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

WIOA MOU serves the key purpose of defining partner roles and focuses, in part, on the shaping of the workforce system. This includes the sharing of resources, referral agreements, etc. In the end, the overall goal is to ensure efficiency within the Eastern Arkansas workforce system.

WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014, and went into effect July 1, 2015. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WIOA has two tiers of partners: Core Program Partners and Required Partners.

The Core Program Partners who are required to collaborate and participate in the One-Stop System include: WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth; Wagner-Peyser labor exchange; Adult Education and Literacy; and, Vocational Rehabilitation. Core Program Partners are in the common performance measures pool and must work closely together to achieve success.

Required Program Partners must participate in the MOU process and provide coordinated services with the comprehensive Workforce Centers. Required Program Partners include the four Core Program Partners as well as: Career and Technical Education, Title V Older Americans, Job Corps, Native American Programs, Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Veterans, Youthbuild, Trade Act, Community Services Block Grant, HUD, Unemployment Compensation, Second Chance, and TANF. In the event any of the required partners do not have funding in the Eastern Arkansas local area, their participation is waived.

Providing businesses with the skilled workforce they need to compete in the global, regional, and local economies is central to Arkansas's vision in implementing the Federal Act. Arkansas's workforce system provides a talent pipeline through the establishment of partnerships between State and local entities, businesses, economic development, education, and community stakeholders. To ensure that the workforce system efficiently meets the needs of both the businesses and the

jobseekers that it serves, Arkansas's workforce agencies have jointly developed the State's workforce plan with the intent that this vision is carried out in each of the local workforce development areas through their Workforce Centers.

The One-Stop Operator will be the point of contact regarding issues pertaining to customer complaints that are substantive to the required partners operating in the comprehensive and affiliate One-Stop Centers. This will include convening partner meetings on a regular basis as well as stakeholder meetings including all core program partners and advising the Administrative Entity and Board Staff on partner operational challenges and successes.

In support of the WIOA MOU the One-Stop Operator responsibilities will also include:

- Coordinating service delivery among partners
- Managing hours of operation at the comprehensive Centers
- Facilitating customer flow, customer service, initial assessment, resource room usage, tracking, and referral processes are carried out as agreed upon in the WIOA MOU
- Communicating Board and Administrative policies and procedures to all partners
- Reporting to the Administration and Board on Center activities

The One-Stop Operator will submit a written and verbal report on work accomplished and challenges encountered on a quarterly basis to the Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas. In addition, the One-Stop Operator will gather data for the Board from the partners on a quarterly basis including: common measure information; tracking incoming clients; resource room usage; and program specific referrals as outlined in the WIOA MOU.

The One-Stop Operator lead staff person must be familiar with the Eastern Arkansas workforce area.

## **WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Delivery Roles and Responsibilities**

The Successful Offeror will provide jobseeker services for WIOA Title I Adults and Dislocated Workers. While the One-Stop Operator plays a key role in basic career service coordination and delivery, the Successful Offeror will be a core program partner in regard to basic career services and will be the service provider for WIOA Title I Adults and Dislocated Workers including individualized career services and training services.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities, according to the WIOA, include: eligibility determination, outreach and intake, initial assessment of skills, supportive service needs, job search and placement assistance, career counseling, provision of information on in-demand occupations and non-traditional employment, recruitment and other business services for employers, referrals to other One-Stop

partner programs and other available programs in the communities, provision of labor market information, information on supportive services available through other programs, information and assistance with establishing eligibility for financial aid and assistance for educational programs other than WIOA, comprehensive skills assessments, in-depth interviewing and evaluation of barriers to employment, development of an Individual Employment Plan, group counseling, career planning, short-term prevocational services, soft skills training, work experience, financial literacy, out of area job search, training services, occupational skills training, supportive services, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, private sector training programs, skill upgrading and retraining, job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities and follow-up services.

## **WIOA Title I Youth Service Delivery Roles and Responsibilities**

Offerors must expend at least 75% of youth funds for out-of-school youth and up to 25% for in-school youth based on youth development principles and best practices that support, motivate, and prepare youth for continuing educational achievements, successful transition into adulthood, and long-term success in employment. The services design and implementation strategies must be appropriate, provide a customized mix of services to address individual needs and goals, and lead to attainment of the performance measures for in-school and out-of-school youth.

Under the WIOA, Youth funds contracted to the service provider for eligible youth shall be used to carry out programs that:

1. Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant.
2. Provide service strategies for each participant.
3. Provide activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized post-secondary credential.
4. Provide preparation for post-secondary educational and training opportunities.
5. Provide strong linkages between academic instruction and occupational education that lead to the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials.
6. Provide preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases.
7. Provide effective connections to employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the regional labor market.

Youth programs must provide the fourteen elements listed below either through direct service, community referrals, or direct purchase:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:
  - a. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available through the school year.
  - b. Pre-apprenticeship programs.
  - c. Internships and job shadowing.
  - d. On-the-job training opportunities.
4. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority considerations for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate.
7. Supportive services.
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.
9. Follow up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
11. Financial literacy education.
12. Entrepreneurial skills training.
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
14. Activities that help you prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

## **Business Services Lead Roles and Responsibilities**

The focal point of the workforce system is business and industry. The Successful Offeror will be the lead and work with a local business services team comprised of partner agencies to provide business development and job development activities. These activities are taking place in Eastern Arkansas and may include:

- **Access to Facilities** – use of Workforce Center facilities by a business for a variety of purposes such as meetings, trainings, orientations, interviews, etc.
- **Assessments** – any test or assortment of tests used to measure the skills, interests and/or personality traits of a jobseeker, potential employee, or current employee.
- **Business Education** – seminars, round tables, workshops, focus groups, etc.
- **Business Information** – information given to a business pertaining to a variety of incentive programs or other information requested that provides a benefit to that business.
- **Hiring Events** – a customized event for a single employer that assists with recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions.
- **Job Fairs** – event for multiple employers that assists with the recruiting, interviewing, and hiring of one or more positions.
- **Job Postings** – staff-entered or web-entered job orders approved by staff.
- **Labor Market Information** – information on state and local labor market conditions, industries, occupations, and characteristics of the workforce, area business identified skills needs, employer wage and benefit trends, short and long-term industry and occupational projections, worker supply and demand, and job vacancies survey results.
- **Rapid Response** – a variety of services to businesses that are facing restructuring or downsizing including onsite workshops for employees in transition, job placement assistance, and information on unemployment benefits.
- **Screening** – any service that involves the initial evaluation of applications or resumes that assists the employer in the recruiting process.
- **Training and Retraining** – any service provided to a business that involves the training or retraining of current or future employees including on-the-job training, work experience, incumbent worker training, etc.

## **Project Budget**

Budget figures for July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018 are not available at this time. Offerors should provide a staffing and costs proposal that demonstrates an understanding and qualification for their submittal. Direct client services such as on-the-job training, work experience, and supportive services should be included in your sample calculations. The Offeror will receive a limited amount of admin dollars to cover administrative functions as required by the WIOA. The bulk of admin dollars are used by the Fiscal Agent, Administrative Entity, and Board support. Center rental expenses including data lines, utilities, and janitorial charges for this year paid by the Title I Service Provider have been:

- Forrest City: \$6,230.60 + rent \$22,022.04
- West Memphis: \$3,430.68 + rent \$21,751.56

Use the above figures in your budget detail. The current approximate figures for the program budget are:

- PY 2016 Youth Activities Funding: \$250,000
- PY 2016 Adult Activities Funding: \$400,000
- PY 2016 Dislocated Worker Activities Funding: \$50,000
- Business services is included within the above figures

## **Submission Information and Requirements**

### ***General Submission Information***

To be considered for funding, an entity must provide a submittal for this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) including supporting documentation in accordance with the instructions in this RFQ. When evaluating a submittal, the Procurement Task Force will consider how well the Offeror has complied with these instructions and provided the required information. The Procurement Task Force reserves the right to request clarifications from any Offeror regarding information in their submittals and may request an oral presentation if deemed appropriate and necessary to make a final recommendation.

Offerors may request clarification to comply with instructions during the Question and Answer period April 19, 2017 through April 26, 2017 by emailing Mary Ann Lawrence at [malaw528@aol.com](mailto:malaw528@aol.com). The Procurement Task Force will discuss and respond to all questions by April 26, 2017 and post the answers on <http://dws.arkansas.gov/wioa.htm>.

Offerors shall not direct questions or have conversations regarding this Request for Qualifications with any Chief Elected Officials or the Consultant, except during the official "question" period. All questions must be communicated through [malaw528@aol.com](mailto:malaw528@aol.com). Questions submitted should be electronic and include in the subject line *Questions Eastern Arkansas Operator & Service Procurement*. Questions without the assigned subject line will not be considered.

The submittal, as well as any reference materials presented, must be typed in English in at least 12-point font and must be on standard portrait 8 ½ " by 11" size with no less than one inch margins. Landscape orientation containing charts, spreadsheets, and oversize exhibits is permissible. Submittals are limited to thirty pages or less including attachments and supportive information.

***Contract Funding Source***

Funding is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and is administered by the Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas.

***Compliance Requirements***

Any award of a contract/agreement under this Request for Qualifications will be subject to applicable requirements of the funding sources, including the U.S. Department of Labor, the State of Arkansas, the Local Chief Elected Officials, and the Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas. These terms and conditions include, without limitation, provisions regarding reporting, insurance, indemnification, audits, nondiscrimination, minority and women's business enterprise requirements, veterans' priority of service, conflict of interest and local hiring provisions.

***Available Funds Note***

It is suggested that the organization has a minimum of three months operating capital on-hand throughout the term of the contract/agreement.

***Public Records***

Offerors are advised that documents in possession of the Procurement Task Force for Eastern Arkansas are considered public records and subject to disclosure under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

***Contractor Qualifications and Responsibilities***

All businesses/organizations must meet a minimum level of administrative and fiscal capacity in order to contract for the requested services. Therefore, the Successful Offeror must provide the following Documentation of Qualifications within a ten-day period after notification. Failure to satisfactorily provide the following documentation could result in disqualification of proposed award.

Documentation of Organization's Qualifications:

- Legal entity - Proof of Incorporation, 501(c) (3), etc. and designation from the IRS of tax-exempt status, if applicable. Must submit document proving legal entity.
- Written personnel policies. Must submit table of contents of personnel policies.
- Written conflict of interest policy for staff and board. Must submit copy of Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Have an ongoing quality assurance process for services. Must submit description of process.

- For organizations that have more than one revenue source, must submit revenue documentation identifying the various sources of the amounts.
- Proven fiscal capacity including capacity for fund accounting. Must submit bound copy of most recent formal audit completed within last year. Must satisfactorily address all findings.
- Verify that the program has procured and will maintain during the life of the contract the following required insurance coverage: professional liability, errors and omissions; commercial general liability insurance, including contractual liability insurance; business automobile liability (if applicable); worker's compensation coverage; and employee dishonesty insurance. Must submit copies of certificate of insurance with contract.

### ***Submittal Content and Scoring***

Proposals will be evaluated on Three Parts:

- Part I Required Format and Content in #1 below
- Part II Experience & Approach (100 points)
- Part III Budget Detail and Staffing Structure (50 points)

The top two scores in Part II will move onto consideration and analysis of budget detail and proposed service levels.

1. **All submittals must contain the following documents in this order to be considered:**

- Entire submittal cannot exceed thirty pages
- Title Page Including Entity, Contact Person (email, phone, address)
- Executive Summary (no longer than 2 page)
- Proposal Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Three References Attesting to Relevant Experience – hard copy letters preferred along with list and contact information

2. **Experience and Approach** (100) points)

Answer the following:

A. Business Services

- Describe specific experience with providing business services and any "lead" role the organization has had in regard to business services.
- Describe specific experience in working with the WIOA Core Program Partners and a business services integrated team.
- Describe the organization's approach to leading a business services team and how seamless services would be coordinated.
- Detail how the organization will go about collecting business intelligence from employers in the local area and how the organization will develop professional relationships with major contributors to the local economy.
- Detail a strategy for providing information and education to employers on services available to them.
- Describe how sector strategies and career pathways will be used to assist with business services.
- Describe services that will be offered to employers and approach.



h. Describe how the organization will develop worksites and determine client placements.

**B. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**

- a. Describe specific experience with providing adult and dislocated worker services. WDBEA Career Advisors, located in the Workforce Centers in West Memphis and Forrest City, have been enrolling and serving eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers since July 2012. All Career Advisors have WIA experience prior to 2012. We have successfully served our 5 county area in meeting or exceeding all performance measures except for the earnings increase for Dislocated Workers. We have established meaningful partnerships with our training providers, agency partners and community organizations to recruit and promote our WIOA programs in each county.
- b. Describe the organization's approach to customer flow, initial screening, partner coordination, referrals and co-enrollments. WDBEA staff have been involved in the management of the Arkansas Workforce Centers since their implementation well over 15 years ago. It is the intent of the WDBEA that each individual who enters the center is greeted and served by professional individuals who can truly assess the customer's need and serve them by either enrolling, co-enrolling or referring them to the appropriate partner. The screening and enrollment process should be seamless and the customer should have a pleasant, positive experience and receive services needed regardless of which funding stream is implemented.
- c. Describe how the organization will communicate with core program partners to coordinate co-enrollments and exits. It is the intent of WDBEA that a computer system or software program will be developed so that each partner can share information on all enrolled individuals and partners can add additional services that would benefit that individual. Until that system is created, monthly meetings will be established among local partners in each county or area so that partners may communicate face-to-face with their partners to discuss the best outcome for each individual in their respective programs.
- d. Detail a strategy for outreach and recruitment efforts related to Adults and Dislocated Workers. Our local workforce centers, community colleges, and Department of Human Service's offices are great recruitment areas for adults and dislocated workers in all of our counties. It is also essential that our Career Advisors form effective partnerships in each counties with organizations and agencies that serve adults with barriers. Partnering with Veteran organizations is a must! Career Advisors will also participate in community events and organize job fairs in each county to promote the services that are offered in the Workforce Centers.
- e. Describe how the organization will ensure barriers are documented and considered. WDBEA Career Advisors will adhere to all ADWS WIOA policies concerning barriers and documentation of barriers for Data Validation and eligibility purposes. We will also implement a priority enrollment policy which will require each person enrolled to either be a WIOA targeted priority population and/or have WIOA identified barriers. WDBEA MIS staff will make sure the correct documentation is in place for each barrier before the enrollment for that individual will be approved.

- f. Describe efforts the organization will make to support sector strategies and career pathways. WDBEA Career Advisors will be educated on Eastern's targeted sectors and perspective employers in the area and the training needed to enter that field. WDBEA Career Advisors will hold career and education fairs to recruit customers into those targeted areas and will be aware of the different points of entry and exit for those in a career pathway from education to employment. Appropriate referrals will also be made to the WDBEA Business Services Representative to coordinate work readiness assessment to ensure that customers are able to get and keep a job.
- g. Describe services that will be offered and the organization's approach. Basic Career Services will be available to all that come to the Workforce Center. Those eligible for WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker Programs will then receive Individualized Career Services to fully assess skills levels and service needs; develop an Individual Employment Plan; and through case management determine the steps needed to gain employment that will lead to self-sufficiency. Those steps might include: Occupational Skills Training (writing an Individual Training Account to an approved training provider to teach the skills needed to enter a specific field or occupation); Work-based Training (may include Registered Apprenticeship programs); On-the -Job Training (WIOA reimburses employers for 50% of training wages during a specified period of time upon retention of that WIOA eligible trainee); Transitional Jobs (time-limited subsidized employment opportunities to provide work experience and history); Incumbent Worker Training (WDBEA is waiting for state policy and guidance and will use this opportunity to train low-skilled employed individuals so they can be promoted to jobs that will make them self-sufficient); Customized Training (training specifically tailored to employment with a specific company in which the employer and WDBEA share in the cost of the training); Supportive Services (services provided to allow the individual in Individualized Career Services to complete the appropriate training. These services may include-child care, transportation, etc.); Follow-up Services (available to all adults and dislocated workers who have entered unsubsidized employment to help them retain employment).
- h. Describe life skills and work readiness services offered by the organization. WDBEA will, in conjunction with all required partners, offer work readiness training for all participants who need that service. ACT Career Ready 101, the National Career Readiness Certificate, and the Microsoft Learning Academy are available in all of the Workforce Centers in Eastern. We plan to utilize a pre-apprenticeship training program as employers are identified to participate in the program. Life skills training will include partnering with both private and non-profit organizations to provide classes on topics such as budgeting, managing a checking account, healthy eating, etc.
- i. Describe case management and career counseling strategies and documentation of interactions with clients. Case management and career counseling strategies should be recorded so that anyone could go to Arkansas JobLink (state required system to record WIOA enrollments and services) with a participant ID number and see the complete story of the individual enrolled beginning with why they need services, what services are being provided, how the participant is doing throughout their WIOA

journey, how often the Career Advisor is communicating with the participant, to seeing the participant complete services, gain employment and meet a one year retention period. WDBEA polices require that at a minimum a case note must be recorded on each individual enrolled at least once a month throughout their enrollment.

- j. Describe strategies for meeting performance measures. WDBEA Career Advisors must understand each performance measure for all funding streams (Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker) and know what the expected measures are for each program year, as set by the state of Arkansas. The Career advisors must assess how the goals will be met as they are assessing the individual who is seeking enrollment into WIOA programs. The Individual Employment Plan and services & training plan for the participant must lead to the desired performance outcome for that funding stream. WDBEA Director of Programs and MIS will monitor performance on a weekly basis to make sure that all of the required data is being recorded in Arkansas JobLink that is required for performance

#### C. Youth Services

- a. Describe specific experience with providing youth services. WDBEA Career Advisors, located in the Workforce Centers in West Memphis and Forrest City, have been enrolling and serving eligible In-School and Out-of- school Youth since July 2012. All Career Advisors have WIA experience prior to 2012. We have successfully served our 5 county area in meeting or exceeding all performance measures pertaining to youth. We have established meaningful partnerships with our school systems, agency partners and community organizations to recruit and promote our WIOA programs in each county
- b. Describe the organization's approach to customer flow, initial screening, partner coordination, referrals and co-enrollments. The initial contact with many youth are out of center recruitment efforts. We use a pre-screening form to gather information about the applicant, including income questions, to do an initial assessment of eligibility and services needed. We use off-site computers when possible to assist them in registering in Arkansas JobLink. We then make appointments for them to come to the Workforce Center to complete eligibility paperwork and ask them to bring their parent or guardian if under 18. For those that come into the center we make an effort for them to register in Arkansas JobLink and see a Career Advisor on that visit. If that isn't possible, we give them a pre-screening form to complete and mail in or bring back to the center to start the eligibility process. Once an assessment is made for eligibility and services needed, appropriate partner referrals and co-enrollments are done with the best interest of the youth in mind.
- c. Describe how the organization will communicate with core program partners to coordinate co-enrollments and exits. It is the intent of WDBEA that a computer system or software program will be developed so that each partner can share information on all enrolled individuals and partners can add additional services that would benefit that individual. Until that system is created, monthly meetings will be established among local partners in each county or area so that partners may communicate face-to-face with

their partners to discuss the best outcome for each individual in their respective programs.

- d. Detail a strategy for outreach and recruitment efforts related to Youth. For In-School Youth recruitment, the local school system and guidance counselor is one of the best recruitment partners available along with our local vocational rehabilitation partners that are working with In-School Youth who have IEP's. For Out-of-School Youth recruitment we partner with our local Adult Education provider, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Community Youth Organizations, TANF, Dept. of Human Services, SNAP E&T Provider, Parole Officers, and other organizations that offer youth related services. We also recruit from within our Workforce Centers as individuals 24 and under often come in registering for employment services.
- e. Describe how the organization will ensure barriers are documented and considered. WDBEA Career Advisors will adhere to all ADWS WIOA and WDBEA policies concerning barriers and documentation of barriers for Data Validation and eligibility. We will also provide Career Advisor training on WIOA In-School and Out-of-School Youth barriers. WDBEA MIS staff will make sure the correct documentation is in place for each barrier before the enrollment for that individual will be approved
- f. Describe efforts the organization will make to support sector strategies and career pathways. WDBEA Career Advisors will be educated on Eastern's targeted sectors and perspective employers in the area and the training needed to enter that field. WDBEA Career Advisors will hold career and education fairs to recruit customers into those targeted areas and will be aware of the different points of entry and exit for those in a career pathway from education to employment. Appropriate referrals will also be made to the WDBEA Business Services Representative to coordinate work readiness assessment to ensure that customers are able to get and keep a job.
- g. Describe how the organization will ensure all fourteen youth elements are available to appropriate youth. WDBEA Career Advisors will be trained on what the fourteen youth elements are and how they are to be implemented. Some of the elements will be done by partnering with organizations that are experts in specific areas such as entrepreneurial training. Arkansas State University's Small Business Development Center is an example of how we could partner to provide this element. It is not realistic that our Career Advisors can provide all of these elements alone so they will be instrumental in making partnerships in their assigned counties to help make sure all elements are available. On-line resources are also an option for some elements.
- h. Describe how referrals will be managed for you who are not eligible or suitable for WIOA services. WDBEA understands that WIOA requires a local area to find resources to serve those not eligible or suitable for WIOA services. There may be those who are not eligible for WIOA Youth services but would be eligible for WIOA Adult services. Those individuals would be enrolled as Adults if funding is available. Particularly for youth, it is extremely important that Career Advisors have meaningful options in the local communities to help applicants achieve meaningful goals.

- i. Describe case management and career counseling strategies and documentation of interactions with youth. Case management and career counseling strategies should be recorded so that anyone could go to Arkansas JobLink (state required system to record WIOA enrollments and services) with a participant ID number and see the complete story of the youth being enrolled beginning with why they need services, what services are being provided, how the participant is doing throughout their WIOA Journey, how often the Career Advisor is communicating with the participant, to seeing the participant complete services, gain employment or enter post-secondary education and meet a one year retention period. WDBEA polices require that at a minimum a case note must be recorded on each individual enrolled at least once a month throughout their enrollment.
- j. Describe strategies for meeting performance measures. WDBEA Career Advisors must understand each performance measure for the Youth Program and know what the expected measures are for each program year, as set by the state of Arkansas. The Career advisors must assess how the goals will be met as they are assessing the individual who is seeking enrollment into WIOA programs. The Individual Service Strategy and services & training plan for the participant must lead to the desired performance outcome for WIOA Youth. WDBEA Director of Programs and MIS will monitor performance on a weekly basis to make sure that all of the required data is being recorded in Arkansas JobLink that is required for performance

**D. One-Stop Operator**

- a. Describe specific experience with serving as One-Stop Operator. WDBEA has been the One Stop operator for the One Stops in Eastern since July 2012.
- b. Detail the role and responsibilities that will be undertaken as One-Stop Operator.
- c. Provide a detailed description of a proposed client flow to ensure Core Program Partners are included in upfront services. As customers come into the Workforce Center they will be greeted by staff at the front desk asking them how they may assist them. After listening to the customers' response they then are directed to a sign in sheet that lists all services available by partners both in and out of the center. The first time customer will be directed to the resource room to register in Arkansas JobLink and then will be seen by the appropriate service provider staff to address the immediate purpose of the visit. Referrals will be made, documented, and followed up on for services requested that are not in the Center. Center staff who initially serve the customer will be aware of all partner services and will conduct an assessment of the customer to make sure they are aware of all services in the workforce system that might benefit their employment or training goal.
- d. Detail the proposed management of the resource room. The resource room will be co-managed by the WDBEA One Stop Manager and the local ADWS Office Manger so that there is consistent, constant oversight of the resource room. The resource room should be a valuable asset to a jobseeker by providing computers, internet, and printing capabilities to enhance their

job search. Resource room staff should be friendly, knowledgeable, and available to assist the job seeker with their questions and offer suggestions to aid their job search. The resource room will also have updated Labor Market Information, Job postings and job fair information, partner materials, training opportunities from local colleges and technical schools and a current local resource guide on services not provided directly through the center (ex. Subsidized and low-rent housing; apartments complexes; Food Banks; Missions; Dept. of Human Services; Shelters for battered women or child abuse; Suicide hot-lines, etc.) Resource room staff will be trained to

evaluate customer needs and offer suggestions for resources not available in the center and have suggestions to who in the community can help them. It is also the One Stop Operators responsibility to make sure the resource room has all equipment in working condition and to make sure the design of the resource room is customer friendly, easily assessable and yet provides privacy for the customers in their use of the resource area.

- e. Detail information on how staff and partner training will be provided. All staff in the One Stop should be trained on required partner services and how to make and track referrals to partners not located in the center. With some staff turnover always being a reality, each partner in the center should make partner service training part of any new employee's orientation. All staff in the center should be knowledgeable about the resources available in the resource room and should be able and expected to periodically work in the resource room as needed. All center staff should observe the resource area and be willing to help any individual who is obviously in need of assistance. On a monthly basis all center staff will attend a partner staff meeting to update all center employees on any new initiatives or training opportunities relevant to the center. The agenda for these meetings will be set by partner managers and the One Stop Operator.
- f. Provide information on experience the organization has in regard to One-Stop Certification achievement and maintenance.
- g. Describe how system and Center orientations will be provided. Orientations on center and system services will be provided to all new customers on a weekly basis. The one hour orientation will be the shared responsibility of all required partners and the One Stop Operator. Additional partner materials may be shared as well as current training or employment opportunities. It is during this orientation that the presenters will have the opportunity to encourage customers to take full advantage of all the system services and further make the customer feel that the Workforce Center is vital to their job search or training needs.

3. **Budget, Budget Narrative, and Service Levels (50 points)**

Based on the current budget information provided under the *Project Budget* section of this Request for Qualifications, provide a detailed anticipated budget. This budget and service information will be used to determine the Successful Offeror, however, it is recognized that actual budget negotiations will take place when funding levels are confirmed with funding sources. For the purposes of your submittal include in your anticipated budget:

- A. Staffing structure including positions, office location, and salary range.

- B. Corporate structure and support services that will be provided to Eastern Arkansas.
- C. Profit or program income proposed.
- D. Indirect cost detail.
- E. Number of proposed youth, adults/dislocated worker service numbers.
- F. Estimate the average caseload.
- G. Estimate cost per participant through exit and follow-up.
- H. Estimate administrative cost percentage.