

Bidders Conference – WIOA Title I Out-Of-School Youth or Blended In-School/Out-Of-School Youth Request for Proposals Program Year 2025/2026

Monday, March 17, 2025

Land of Sky Regional Council office, West Asheville and via Zoom

1:30 pm

Attendees

1. Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council and Director, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
2. Chris Haring, BuildEd Corporation
3. Kristin Kress, Goodwill of Northwest NC
4. Jennifer Saladis-Moscoco, EDSI
5. Chris Pinnisi, Director of Compliance, EDSI
6. Shamira Wright, Consultant, Urban League of Central Carolinas

Bidder's conference opened at 1:36 pm. Nathan Ramsey opened the bidders' conference and requested introductions from the attendees at the bidders conference. Nathan Ramsey provided a brief overview of the WIOA Title I Out-Of-School Youth or Blended In-School/Out-Of-School Youth Request for Proposals Program Year 2025/2026. The RFP was released on February 24, 2025, and the notice was published the week of February 24, 2025. The current federal environment is uncertain and WIOA has not yet been re-authorized. Congress had included WIOA reauthorization in the December Continuing Resolution, but it was ultimately removed. Congress has introduced legislation to re-authorize WIOA referred to as "A Stronger Workforce for America Act" (ASWA) but this legislation has not been enacted into law.

The Board is required by federal law to competitively procure WIOA services and we must release a RFP at least once every three years. The timeline for this procurement was reviewed. Letters of intent to bid shall be submitted by Friday, March 28 at 5:00 pm. We will be accepting questions through Friday, April 11. Proposals are due by Friday, April 18. Contracts are cost reimbursement. We are expecting a contract from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026 and the contract may be extended. Funding available to the Board varies each year and we do not know the PY25-26 allocations until May or June.

The contact for this RFP shall be Nathan Ramsey at Nathan@landofsky.org. The RFP lists Zia@landofsky.org and she will be retiring effective Friday, April 4 so please contact Nathan Ramsey.

The Board is required to spend 75% of our youth funding on Out-Of-School youth. There is an opportunity for a blended in-school and out-of-school youth as well. The Board is required to spend at least 20% of youth expenditures on work experience. We have shared our federal performance measures, and we are required to meet these federal mandates. All of the contracts executed pursuant to this RFP are contingent on federal funding availability.

Nathan then opened up the floor for questions

1. **Is there a particular age for the youth?** The focus is on the definition of Out-Of-School Youth ages 16 – 24. In-school Youth starts at age 14. We are not completely ignoring In-School Youth as we believe these programs are very beneficial to young people and will help them achieve academic success and stay in school.
2. **What is the geographic focus of this RFP?** This RFP is focused on Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties. We are offering the option of proposals serving one county or multiple counties up to the entire four-county region in the effort to attract the greatest number of proposals.
3. **Is there a range or maximum for this funding?** WIOA Youth funding is allocated to Mountain Area Workforce Development Board through the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions from the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. We will share the historical funding of Mountain Area Workforce Development Board.
4. **Are the contracts reimbursable?** Yes. We do not provide a profit or cover administrative overhead but the contracts are cost reimbursement for actual, allowed costs pursuant to the contracts and WIOA.
5. **How many OJT contracts are anticipated for the upcoming year?** We anticipate 5-10 contracts but that is dependent on funding availability.
6. **How many people are normally placed in the region with a contract?** Contracts should be for one individual. We seldom, if ever, do a contract with multiple individuals for the same employer. OJT contracts should focus on our target sectors as listed in the RFP.
7. **Is there a maximum overall contract amount? Would \$250,000 be too high?** We don't think we can answer this question as we would need to review all of the proposals to see which proposals offer to serve the most youth with the most rewarding and enriching experience. We will provide an historical overview of the funding awards from Mountain Area Workforce Development Board.
8. **You mentioned goals and alignment with WIOA performance measures, are they the same as was shared in the RFP?** We will share our current youth performance measures.

The bidder's conference concluded at 2:02 PM.