Under the direction of the Chester County Commissioners and the Chester County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB), the Chester County Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is seeking proposals from providers who are interested in providing Title I Workforce Development Services in Chester County beginning on July 1, 2024. This RFP will be open from Wednesday, February 14, 2024, until Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.

The ideal partner for Title I Workforce Development Services will provide relevant and actionable solutions that (1) increase customer opportunities through enhanced access to services and (2) improve overall customer outcomes by successfully leveraging funding and integrating workforce services. This includes the ability to quantify and articulate progress against these objectives.

Key Objectives for the CCWDB:
1. **Focus on overall improvement in customer experience:** CCWDB is seeking partners with a customer experience focus that understand and recommend innovative ways to effectively reach customers across the geographic, socioeconomic, and industry diversity of Chester County.
2. **Improve outcomes:** CCWDB is seeking partners with an outcomes-focus including the ability to articulate the quality, quantity and benefit of services provided to their customers.
3. **Expand reach:** Chester County is a geographically diverse county. The CCWDB is seeking partners who understand the unique challenges of Chester County and will recommend innovative ways to effectively reach customers in need in order to maximize the availability and access to Workforce Development services.

**Background:**
The Chester County Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is the entity designated by the Chester County Workforce Development Board (CCWDB) and the Chester County Commissioners to provide staff support to the CCWDB and act as the administrative entity and the fiscal agent for the operation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Programs in the Chester County Local Workforce Development Area.

It is the mission of the Chester County Workforce Development Board to provide training, employment, and workforce development services, to produce workers better equipped to compete in the global economy and destination of choice and a desirable place to invest, live, work, and raise a family.

**The Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA)**
The Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) passed in July 2014 and full implementation was required in stages from July 1, 2015, to July 1, 2016. The purpose of WIOA is to move toward a higher level of service for employers and job seekers through better alignment of education, economic development and workforce development systems at the state, regional and local levels. WIOA maintains the primary service delivery structure, the nation’s network of one-stop career centers (PA CareerLink® in Pennsylvania), but challenges center Service Providers with higher expectations for partner investments, system leadership, engaging employers, sector strategies,
prioritizing services for under-served populations, and achieving better performance outcomes. A new emphasis is placed on achievement of credentials that are valued by multiple employers and are stackable toward more advanced certifications and degrees.

All WIOA information throughout this RFP is designated through the guidance provided by the US Department of Labor and the PA Department of Labor and Industry’s Bureau of Workforce Development Administration and is subject to change by these funding organizations.

The Stevens Amendment

The Stevens Amendment, Public Law 101-166, Section 511, is an appropriations provision that requires grantees of the Department of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education to disclose for a grant program the percent of the costs financed with federal funds.

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs are federally supported 100% by the U.S. Department of Labor as part of an award totaling $5,320,156.07 with $0 (0%) state, local and/or non-governmental funds.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs are federally supported 100% by the U.S. Department of Human Services as part of an award totaling $1,262,612.48 with $0 (0%) state, local, and/or non-governmental funds.
- Discretionary grants are federally supported by the U.S. Department of Labor as part of an award totaling $1,414,904.99 being state, local and/or non-governmental funds.

Questions and Bidder’s Conference:

One Stop Operator and Title I Services Bidder’s Conferences will be held on Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 1 p.m. at the PA CareerLink®-Chester County and United Way Financial Stability Center at 479 Thomas Jones Way, Suite 500, Exton, PA 19341.

- Questions emailed to workforcedevelopment@chesco.org by 3:00 pm on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 will be answered and posted on the CCWDB website (www.chesco.org/wib) on Thursday, March 7, 2024. Any questions received after 3:00 pm on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, will not be answered.
- Submission Format: DWD will use an electronic submission format, available at http://www.chesco.org/wib
- Scoring: Scores will be based on the following topics: Organizational Capacity, Statement of Need, Program Design and Service Strategy, Staffing, Past Performance and Best Practices, Leveraging of Resources, and Budget.
- Due date: Applications are due by 3:00 PM on Thursday, March 14, 2024.
- Start Date: All program operations will be expected to commence no later than July 1, 2024.
- Attachments: Attachments can be accessed at www.chesco.org/wib and also on the last page of the electronic application form. Applications will not be accepted by the electronic system without the required attachments.
- Electronic System: Technical assistance requests regarding the electronic system, including log-in, viewing of previous applications/drafts, and attachments, will be directed to ccdcdc@chesco.org
Scope of Work

Proposing entities are responsible for the minimum requirements outlined below, but final requirements are subject to change. Proposers are encouraged to include additional activities and innovations within their proposals that meet the needs of job seeker and employer customers.

As stated throughout this RFP, in a successful PA CareerLink® there should be no stand-alone programs. The partners are interdependent upon each other to provide quality programs and services that benefit the customers they serve. The applicant in its proposal shall describe how Title I services will be integrated into the PA CareerLink® -Chester County System programs and partnerships, including the following specific information:

- Plans to coordinate and work interdependently with other organizations in the PA CareerLink®-Chester County system to ensure the employment and training needs of customers throughout Chester County are being met and job seekers are qualified to join the workforce and that employer customers are adequately served by all Partners.
- Proposed special arrangements between the Title I Services Provider and other organizations or employers designed for the benefit of job seekers.
- Plans to coordinate and assimilate all functions including specific planned activities in support of the PA CareerLink® Chester County.
- Describe the workshops or related activities that will be offered as part of career services in the PA CareerLink® Chester County to all customers.
- Coordination with the EARN Program, United Way Financial Stability Center, and all other programs at the PA CareerLink® - Chester County.
- Describe services tailored specifically to youth and adult justice-involved and re-entry populations in the County.
- Recommendations on ways to maximize the reach of the PA CareerLink® Chester County services to the entirety of Chester County and the ability to connect consumers to services relevant to their needs.

Minimum Requirements: (provide examples where necessary)
- Determination of customer eligibility and conduction of intake
- Direct service staff on-site every day of operation
- Knowledge of available supportive services and referrals to supportive services as needed
- Compliance with requirements as they relate to all programs
- Tracking and reporting of all customer activity
- Reconciliation of in-house reports with Labor & Industry reports
- Submission of participant information and required reports prior to established deadlines
- Submission of required programmatic reports provide examples
- Understanding and sharing of programmatic guidance released at the local, state, and federal levels
- Cooperation with and maintenance of a strong working relationship with CCWDB staff
- Function as the provider of WIOA Title I delivery of services throughout the county
- Assist in the staffing of the Computer Resource Center (CRC) in the PA CareerLink® Chester County according to the schedule set forth by the Operator and Administrator
- Assure compliance with US Department of Labor and the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry requirements as they relate to programs and customers employment and training needs
- Assign staff to appropriate teams and committees
- Act as an active member of the Business Services Team and events
- Conduct outreach, recruitment, and orientation throughout the county
- Conduct Rapid Response activities as part of the local team
- Conduct an initial assessment of customer’s education level, skill level, and work history
- Conduct career counseling in individual and group sessions
- Provide easy access to services that are responsive to customer’s needs and makes them competitive in the local and regional labor market
- Provide case management, retention, and follow-up activities
- Develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) and/or other participant plans as required
- Determine suitability for Individual Training Accounts, On the Job Training, and other training activities
- Conduct Rapid Response activities as part of the local team
- Conduction outreach, recruitment, and orientation throughout the county
- Conduction career counseling in individual and group sessions
- Provide easy access to services that are responsive to customer’s needs and makes them competitive in the local and regional labor market
- Provide case management, retention, and follow-up activities
- Develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) and/or other participant plans as required
- Determine suitability for Individual Training Accounts, On the Job Training, and other training activities
- Provide workshops based on customer need and demand, and per recommendations received from other program partners of the PA CareerLink® Chester County or the CCWDB
- Provide job placement services
- Provide labor market and job availability information to customers
- Conduct employer outreach and engagement in coordination with the Business Services Team
- Participate in job fairs workshops and countywide networking resource and Industry partner events
- Complete and maintain a current participant file for every customer as required by the funding sources and local monitoring sources
- Ensure that accurate customer information is entered in appropriate databases, including, but not limited to, the Pennsylvania workforce development system of record
- Maintain confidentiality of customer information to meet the requirements of HIPAA and other Personal Identifying Information-related regulations
- If applicable, additional programmatic requirements as indicated by the funding stream

**Evaluation, Selection and Review Criteria:**
Proposals will be reviewed, scored and evaluated through a review committee, consisting of Workforce Development Board Members and other knowledgeable individuals. The Review Team will make recommendations to the CCWDB and the Chester County Commissioners who will select the providers and make final decisions for the One Stop Operator and Title I Provider for Employer, Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services.

- A committee selected by the CCWDB will review proposals that meet the general criteria established by the RFP. The review committee consists of CCWDB members and staff. The proceedings of the review committee are confidential. Members of the review committee are not to be contacted by proposers. Proposers who violate this provision risk exclusion from consideration.
- Through this review and evaluation process, each member of the review committee will evaluate each proposal to assess the proposed services and activities.
- Upon review and evaluation of proposals, the review committee will then meet to discuss each proposal.
- During the evaluation process, the review committee may, at its discretion, request any one or all proposers to make oral presentations. Such presentations will provide proposers with an opportunity to answer any question the review committee may have on a proposal. Not all proposers may be asked to make such oral presentations.
• Upon conclusion of the review and evaluation process, the review committee will recommend a provider to the Executive Director of the CCWDB. A recommendation will be made to the Chester County Workforce Development Board for approval, after which the recommendation will be made to the Chester County Commissioners for approval.

Proposals are to be divided into the following categories when submitted through the online grants management system. Please note that only the narrative submitted electronically, and not additional narrative attachments, will be scored. All proposals will be scored based on these categories:

• Statement of Need (10 points)
  o Include local-level data from reliable, cited sources
  o Describe characteristics of target population and community in Chester County
  o Identify any current gaps in service that would be filled by the proposed programming

• Program Management and Organizational Capacity (10 points)
  o Describe the fiscal controls in place for auditing and accountability procedures
  o Provide total years of operation and current annual budget
  o Demonstrate an understanding of WIOA federal and state training guidelines and provide relevant examples
  o Detail ability to provide services to all geographic areas of the county
  o Describe capabilities regarding data collection and performance management and provide relevant examples

• Program Design and Service Strategy (30 points)
  o Include a detailed description of the services and activities proposed, including customer flow and integration with other partners and services at the PA CareerLink® - Chester County
  o Describe, with specifics for each population, how services and engagement will be provided to populations with barriers, including, but not limited to; justice-involved persons, job seekers aged 55+, Veterans, job seekers with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness or precariously housed, and job seekers with Limited English Proficiency.
  o Describe how services and engagement will be provided to WIOA-eligible youth ages 16-24. How will Out of School Youth (OSY) be engaged?
  o Describe how Title I will encourage and support dual enrollments and referrals
  o Describe how programming will reach underserved geographic areas and populations in the county
  o Address all required elements listed in the guidance
  o Identify any assessments or other tools that will be utilized to maximize service delivery
  o Include any innovations proposed that support the mission of the Chester County Workforce Development Board and will better serve the job seekers and employers of Chester County
  o Describe possible solutions for addressing participant transportation gaps and issues
  o Budget
    • Submission of a detailed budget on provided template as well as a budget narrative. The budget should be calculated and submitted based on one year of service provision
    • The “Request Amount” entered at the beginning of the electronic application should reflect the total amount proposed for one year of service delivery for the single service delivery category
    • The budget shall clearly identify which costs are programmatic and which costs are administrative. Administrative costs shall be consistent with the cost
limits in the WIOA program for the local area

- If submitting for multiple categories, a second budget and budget narrative may be submitted with each proposal, indicating any savings in staff time or other costs should the proposer be awarded any combination of contracts under concurrent RFPs.

- Leveraging of Resources and Existing Partnerships (20 points)
  - Describe the inclusion of existing partnerships and the leveraging of additional resources in providing successful services under this proposal.
  - Include fiscal, staffing, and in-kind resources that would be leveraged through this proposal and other contracts administered by the CCWDB.
  - Describe any applicable collaboration with industry partnerships, economic development, community-based organizations, other workforce development services, education providers, or other agencies.
  - Describe how Title I will support onsite partnerships with other providers to coordinate service delivery with partnering agencies and the Financial Stability Center.
  - List potential partner agencies you have contacted, including supportive service providers such as mental health and housing, and the status of that contact.

- Past Performance and Best Practices (20 points)
  - Describe internal controls for monitoring and structure.
  - What type of data strategies are used to track performance regularly.
  - Describe experience in workforce development programming, including number of years of experience and what types of programming.
  - Include quantitative and qualitative information regarding past performance in workforce development programming.
  - Describe your strategy to ensure that state WIOA Performance Metric goals are not only met, but exceeded.
  - Describe methods for collecting and analyzing job seeker and employer feedback and utilizing results for continuous improvement.
  - Attach no more than three (3) letters of reference or recommendation from previous partners or grantors.

- Staffing (10 points)
  - Include a list of all proposed positions involved in the delivery of the proposed activities, and whether those positions are remote, onsite, or hybrid.
  - Include the minimum requirements for each position proposed.
  - Describe plans for transition, as well as how staff turnover and changes will be handled while maintaining integrity of services and contractual obligations.
  - Detail plans to ensure required on-site coverage at all times during operating hours.
  - Please note: Operator staff cannot act as supervisors for Title I staff, but are expected to work as cooperative partners.

**Required Attachments for ALL Applications**
- Budget Forms (Template Provided on website)
- Evidence of Liability Insurance
- Job Descriptions/Resumes of All Personnel
- Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest Form
- Organizational Chart
- Support Letters/Letters of Reference
- List of Locations where Title I or other Workforce Development Services have been provided over the last four (4) years.
Optional Attachments:

- Miscellaneous
- Any MOUs, if applicable

**Title I Workforce Development Services Provider Specifications**

**General Expectations**

Proposals will incorporate all Title I services and activities; for Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth, and Rapid Response. Services for the justice-involved and re-entry populations must also be incorporated, and collaboration with all workforce programs is expected. The Title I Provider will coordinate programmatic activities in accordance with the requirements of various funding streams, as applicable and as amended. These funding streams include but are not limited to: Title I Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker Funds, Rapid-Response Funds; Statewide Activity Funds; other federal funds; other state funds; and Department of Labor discretionary funds. The selected provider will function under the name and direction of the PA CareerLink® as a fully integrated partner without regard to the organizational mission of the selected entity. Future evaluation of selected provider performance will take level of and attitude toward collaboration into account.

The Title I Provider is solely responsible to meet the local area’s established Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programmatic performance requirements and participant-based outcomes as established by the Department of Labor and Industry.

The provision of services specified in this RFP requires substantive knowledge and understanding of the local labor market, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its implementing regulations, applicable state and federal regulations and circulars, and the policies of the federal Department of Labor and PA Department of Labor and Industry. Many of the federal regulations can be found in the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) library at [www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov); state publications can be found in the Publications and Workforce Professionals sections at [www.paworkforce.state.pa.us](http://www.paworkforce.state.pa.us). Knowledge and understanding of the full text and content of these applicable laws, regulations and programmatic requirements, and the local customer base are the responsibility of the Proposer. Please note that requirements contained in this RFP may change based on revised local, state and federal rules. Proposers will be required to make staffing and programmatic modifications to accommodate mandated changes throughout the term of the contract.

The selected entity will provide innovative, high-quality job-seeker and employer services using strategies that will enable PA CareerLink® customers to become employed in family-sustaining jobs. Proposers must be willing to develop new plans or revise existing program plans at the direction of CCWDB as agreed upon during the term of the contract. Travel will be required for service provision throughout Chester County based on feedback provided by the CCWDB or One Stop Operator.

The selected entity will maintain agreements with eligible training providers and review and approve training requests. **Training funds are based on available resources and are NOT to be included in the**
proposed budget. Availability of training funds and funding requirements and categories are subject to change throughout the program year.

**Staffing**

Each proposal must include the identification of individuals who will perform the duties as proposed. If specific persons have not been identified at the time of proposal submission, job titles and descriptions must be provided. If applicable, the selected entity will need to complete and implement an approved transition plan and have staff in place during the transition period. At least one (1) staff member must be bilingual (English-Spanish). Bilingual staff must demonstrate proficiency or hold a bilingual certificate in both spoken and written word.

Title I staff are responsible for coordinating employment and training programs between private industry and eligible individuals with the goal of lowering unemployment or under-employment in Chester County. The main purpose of these programs is to place unemployed persons into jobs or training programs that will lead to employment. Title I training services are not meant to be used for training that does not increase skill levels which will lead to employment. All staff is expected to provide some level of direct customer service or customer support such as data entry.

In the event staff does not perform satisfactorily within the sole discretion of the CCWDB and the County Commissioners, the contractor shall assign another staff member to the PA CareerLink® Chester County. A plan must be in place during times of staff transition to ensure the integrity of service delivery.

**Space/Equipment Provided**

The staff shall be located primarily at the PA CareerLink®-Chester County, 479 Thomas Jones Way, Suite 500, Exton, PA, with the expectation of time spent delivering services throughout the County, as the Operator, CCWDB, and the County Commissioners may designate. The Title I Provider and its employees/independent contractors shall comply with all Building Rules and Regulations and Facility Operations Rules and Regulations as set forth in the Resource Sharing Agreement for the PA CareerLink®-Chester County, as may be amended from time to time.

The Title I Provider shall be designated specific space in the PA CareerLink® - Chester County. Office furniture shall be supplied and maintained by the County, provided that the Title I Provider shall be responsible for the replacement of office furniture damaged other than in the normal course of business.

Utilities are provided and paid through the Resource Sharing Agreement.

The Title I Provider shall work with the County to determine information technology and connectivity needs. All proposed technology line items should be listed separately in the proposed budget.

The Title I Provider is not permitted to make any alteration to the PA CareerLink®-Chester space provided onsite or its designated space therein without the prior written consent of the County.

The Title I Provider is responsible for ensuring all staff have access to a vehicle for use for job duties, as well as any necessary arrangements for mileage reimbursement.
Data Entry Requirements for all Providers
The successful bidder will be required to register with and data enter information on the Pennsylvania workforce development system of record. The successful bidder must also ensure that each program participant is registered in the system of record and that all information is promptly and correctly data entered.

County Requirements:

- **Reports**: A monthly report will be required for submission by the 10th day (or the prior business day if the 10th falls on a weekend or holiday) of each month, as well as an in-depth report to be submitted by the 10th day of every other month for inclusion in the CCWDB meeting packets. Elements of the reports will be finalized during contract negotiations.
- **Monitoring**: As a recipient of public funds, all successful applicants who sign a contract with DWD will be required to fully comply with ongoing reporting and monitoring requirements.
- **Meetings**: Meetings shall be held with CCWDB staff and other partners.
- **Certifications and Reservations**: Provision of services specified in this RFP requires substantive knowledge and understanding of the applicable rules and regulations. Recipients of federal, state, or local funding must certify compliance with applicable funding regulations and adhere to applicable definitions described in the Application Instructions & Guidelines. Additional certifications may be required depending on the specific program.
- **Proposal Rejections**: The County, which specifically includes the Board of Commissioners and the CCWDB, reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this RFP and to negotiate separately with competing applicants. The County, which specifically includes the Board of Commissioners and the CCWDB reserves the right to waive any and all technical requirements and informalities, as it deems necessary. No costs associated with the preparation or submittal of the application is reimbursable.

Potential Conflict of Interest during the Selection Process

Some CCWDB members and/or the entities the member represents or is employed by may be eligible to submit a proposal under this RFP.

- If a CCWDB member participates in discussions regarding the creation, review, or release of this RFP, the member and/or the entity s/he represents or is employed by will be disqualified from submitting a proposal or partnering with a lead applicant on a proposal.
- If a CCWDB member or the entity s/he represents or is employed by submits a proposal in response to this RFP, and the CCWDB member subsequently participates in discussion, review, or evaluation of proposals or the award of a contract to a successful applicant, the member and/or the entity s/he represents or is employed by will be disqualified from being awarded the contract under this RFP or partnering with the successful applicant.

*Applicants shall disclose all potential conflicts of interest in their proposal, including but not limited to, relationships with particular training or other service providers, through the Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Form.*
All Applicants
A service provider may apply for one, two, or all concurrent elements of this RFP cycle; however, the applicant shall describe in its proposal all firewalls and internal controls within the applicant-service provider entity in regard to competition, oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of the performance of the service provider if selected as contractor.

In the event the same entity is selected to be the One-Stop Operator and Title I Provider, then the selected entity will need to establish clear internal controls and firewalls between the staff serving as the One-Stop Operator and Title I Provider. Firewalls and internal controls shall be shared in writing as part of the proposal. All firewalls and internal controls shall conform to the specifications in WIOA and its regulations and guidance, relevant OMB circulars, and all other federal, state and local regulatory guidance, rules, and regulations.

In the event the successful applicant has been or will be selected to perform more than one (1) of the administrative or programmatic functions (ex. system operator, direct provider), the successful applicant will work with the County and the CCWDB to develop a written agreement to clarify how the successful applicant will carry out its responsibilities regarding these functions while demonstrating compliance with WIOA and its corresponding regulations and guidance, relevant OMB circulars and the State’s workforce system. This may also require state approval.

The successful applicant shall not be permitted to assign the contract. Subcontracting of the contract shall only be permitted as authorized by the County. Any expectations of subcontracts should be included in the proposal submission.

Please be advised that the level of funding available is subject to change. All funding is contingent upon the availability of state and federal funds and also upon the continued authorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act activities in Chester County. Additionally, please be advised that any applicable budgetary items relating to profit will be negotiated separately at the time of contracting.

Providers are invited to submit proposals for any or all of the categories, however, each category must be submitted separately and each contract will be awarded separately.

Contract Period
The anticipated term for the contract(s) that will be awarded from this RFP is July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. The submitted budget must be for a single year. At the start of the new program year, and each year thereafter, the contract(s) may be renewed, at the CCWDB and County Commissioners’ sole discretion, for three (3) additional one (1) year periods, up to a cumulative total of four (4) years (hereinafter referred to as the “Renewal Terms”). In the event the CCWDB and the County Commissioners elect, in their sole discretion, to exercise one or more of the renewal terms, the CCWDB and the County Commissioners will advise the successful contractor, in writing, of its intent to utilize a renewal term thirty (30) days prior to the end date of the then current term. Nothing herein shall prohibit the CCWDB and the County Commissioners from conducting an RFP during the term of the contract or any Renewal Term.

In the event of pricing changes due to changes in prevailing costs of labor and materials in the area, the successful contractor may submit a written request for price adjustments in line with these changes for
the duration of any Renewal Term(s). Any requested price adjustment shall be received in writing by the CCWDB and the County Commissioners at least 100 days prior to the end of the then current term. The CCWDB and the County Commissioners reserve the right to accept or reject said proposed adjustments.

The successful contractor will be a contractor to the CCWDB and the County Commissioners and as such, will be expected to work closely with the CCWDB staff to assure continuity across administration of all WIOA workforce funds allocated to the County (fiscal agent).