



Metro North Regional Employment Board

"Building Partnerships for a Better Workforce"

METRO NORTH REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
FOR JOB READINESS SERVICES
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019
August 1, 2018-June 30, 2019
(funding contingent)**

**METRO NORTH REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD
186 ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY, SUITE 216
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138**

**RESPONSE DUE:
Friday, June 29, 2018, 4:00 p.m. ET**

Please submit all questions to REBPROCUREMENTS@mnreb.org

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SCHEDULE

A. Introduction

The Metro North Regional Employment Board (REB) is issuing this request for applications (RFA) to select qualified providers of job readiness services as part of a regional effort to address the workforce needs directly and indirectly impacted by the new Encore Boston Harbor gaming facility. There is no predetermined number of awards; the REB will select as many or as few providers as necessary to deliver the required services. If selected, the successful applicant(s) will be required to work with the REB during a program planning phase to design the final program model.

The REB currently has a pending application for grant funds before the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC). The services procured through this RFA would be funded through the grant from MGC. Any contract awarded as part of this RFA is contingent on the REB receiving the grant award from MGC. The total amount of funds available and scope of services may be changed depending on the amount of funds received from MGC.

Contracts for successful applicants will cover the period August 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Should the REB's contract with MGC differ from these dates, contracts for successful applicants will be amended accordingly.

B. Schedule

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| June 1, 2018 | Request for Applications released |
| June 22, 2018 | Deadline for submission of written questions |
| June 29, 2018 | Proposals due by 4:00pm ET |
| Anticipated Contract start date | August 1, 2018 |

2. BACKGROUND

A. Workforce Impact of Encore Boston Harbor

The construction of the Encore Boston Harbor gaming facility in Everett is creating, and will create, an impact on the region's labor market and workforce development system. The facility will bring over 4,000 new jobs to the region, covering a wide range of occupations in gaming and non-gaming, including, but not limited to, hospitality, culinary, building maintenance, information technology, accounting, and cash handling. This influx of thousands of new jobs will put additional strain on a region that is already struggling to fill many open positions. For example, over 1,600 of the new jobs are expected to be in hospitality and culinary positions, in a region that is already experiencing a shortage of workers in these industries. This situation necessitates a regional, comprehensive approach to addressing the workforce impact created by this new gaming facility. The region will need to prepare and train local residents for jobs directly at the gaming facility as well as address the needs of existing employers who will be impacted by the project. The services to be procured through this RFA are designed to address the job readiness needs of the region's residents that will prepare them for job opportunities created as a result of the new gaming facility.

B. REB's Application to Massachusetts Gaming Commission

The services to be procured through this RFA are part of a larger regional project described in the REB's application for grant funds to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission's (MGC) 2018 Community Mitigation Fund (CMF) Workforce Development Pilot Program. Applicants to this RFA are highly encouraged to read the REB's application, which can be accessed on the MGC website here:

<https://massgaming.com/wp-content/uploads/Metro-North-Regional-Employment-Board-2018-Workforce-Development-Pilot-Program-Application.pdf>

Any and all contract(s) awarded as part of this RFA are contingent on the REB receiving the grant award from MGC. The total amount of funds available and scope of services may be changed depending on the amount of funds received from MGC, if any.

3. FUNDING AND PERFORMANCE PERIOD

A. Performance Period

Contracts for successful applicants will cover the period August 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019, with the contingencies described in the previous section. Should the REB's contract with MGC differ from these dates, contracts for successful applicants will be amended accordingly.

B. Contract Type

Contracts executed as a result of this RFA process will be paid through cost-reimbursement. The selected applicant(s) will be required to have fiscal systems in place to successfully execute a cost-reimbursement contract. Final contracts will also be subject to any changes in legislation, regulations or policies promulgated by the funding sources. The REB reserves the right to vary or change the terms of any contract executed as a result of this RFA, including funding levels, scope of services, performance standards, referral sources and contract term, as it deems necessary.

C. Eligible Respondents

The respondent may be a private, for profit or non-profit company or a government agency. Eligible bidders include:

- Institutions of higher education
- Community-based organizations
- ABE/ESOL/Job Training providers
- Non-traditional public schools, e.g., night or adult school, career or technical education school
- Workforce intermediaries
- Business organizations, including chambers of commerce
- Labor organizations
- A consortium of organizations

Respondents may submit proposals in which subcontractors are identified to provide program components. Respondents may also identify organizations with which they will collaborate to enhance the project design. However, any proposal submissions from a collaboration of two or more entities should clearly provide the following information in an MOU signed by someone with authority to commit the organization to the partnership:

- Identify the lead agency for the collaborative partnership
- State the roles and responsibilities of each collaborator
- Include an organizational chart for each organization and for the collaborative
- Describe how funds will flow within the collaborative
- Identify the percentage of each partner's fiscal responsibility
- Identify the qualified fiscal agent for the collaborative partnership.

Partnerships may submit separate MOUs with each partner or one MOU among all partners.

4. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. JOB READINESS

The REB seeks to select provider(s) to deliver up to four (4) job readiness courses in the following four communities:

- Everett
- Malden
- Chelsea
- Revere

The job readiness courses will be designed to deliver a job readiness curriculum contextualized to the hospitality industry, which may include, but is not limited to, resumes, interviewing skills, workplace communication skills, job search skills, and conflict management. The end goal of the job readiness courses is employment at Encore Boston Harbor or employment at another employer impacted by the new gaming facility.

Services to be provided by the selected applicant(s) include:

- Outreach and recruitment
- Curriculum development
- Instruction
- Case management
- Job placement
- 30-day retention

Each job readiness course will serve a minimum of 18 students each and run for a total of 40 hours. However, the final program schedule may be amended in discussions with the REB during program planning.

The selected applicant(s) will be responsible for tracking, documenting, and reporting the following performance metrics:

- Number of individuals recruited
- Number of individuals enrolled
- Number of individuals completed course
- Number of individuals placed into employment
- Wage and benefits at placement
- Number of individuals who reached 30-day employment retention

Applicants may decide to deliver their job readiness services in one, more than one, or all of the cities listed above. Services must be provided at a location in the city or cities in which the applicant is proposing to deliver services. Applicants must indicate in their application in which city or cities listed above they propose to deliver their services and the specific location where the course will be held. If

the lead applicant is not based in these cities, the applicant may partner with an organization in the city or find space in the city to hold the class and services.

There is \$12,500 available for each job readiness course, for a total of \$50,000 in available funds. Each course is to be funded through grant funds from the MGC. The availability of funds is subject to MGC's award of grant funding to the REB.

5. **SOLICITATION, PROCESS AND TERMS**

A. **Period of Solicitation**

This RFA is being released on June 1, 2018. The deadline to submit a response(s) to the RFA is Friday, June 29, 2018 no later than 4:00 p.m. (ET).

B. **RFA Questions and Answers**

The primary mode of communication between the Metro North REB and potential bidders will occur via http://mnreb.org/reb_procurements.php. Questions and Answers and any RFA amendments will be posted on the website. It is the bidder's responsibility to check the website page frequently to stay apprised throughout the process.

All questions pertaining to the RFA must be received in writing via email at REBPROCUREMENTS@mnreb.org. All questions must be received by June 22, 2018. Questions will not be answered over the phone or in person.

C. **Review and Evaluation Process**

Applications will first be reviewed to ensure minimum criteria are met. Proposals that do not meet minimum standards will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. Failure to meet minimum criteria can include, but is not limited to, non-responsive language in the submission, failure to clearly address all areas in the project narrative as required, lack of required documentation, and proposing programs which do not address the services and requirements contained in this RFA.

Applications will then be reviewed by the REB. The narrative responses will be scored on a 100-point scale according to the following breakdown:

| Narrative Criteria | Point Value |
|---|--------------------|
| Organizational structure and capacity | 25 |
| Past performance and experience serving residents of target communities | 25 |
| Program design and curriculum outline | 30 |
| Grants and fiscal management and budget | 20 |
| Total Points Available | 100 |

The REB is not required to contract with the applicant receiving the highest score on the narrative response. Other factors in the selection process may include, but are not limited to:

- Budget
- Transportation and geographical feasibility
- Participants needs and preferences
- Participants potential to benefit

The REB may request additional information in the form of emails, phone calls, or in-person meetings.

6. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

A. Submittal Procedure and Format

To be considered for funding, applicants must submit their proposal via email to REBPROCUREMENTS@mnreb.org. Applicants will receive an email response verifying receipt of the proposal. **Completed RFA responses must be submitted by Friday, June 29, 2018 by 4:00p.m. (ET).**

PROPOSALS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE AND TIME ARE LATE AND WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure responses are received by the date and time listed above. "Technical issues" will not be a sufficient reason for late responses.

All proposals must be organized and assembled as described in this Section. Copies of forms that are bolded are included in the Attachments to this RFA. Please submit proposal in this order:

- 1. Cover Page**
- 2. Partnership Chart (if a partnership application)**
3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with partners outlining roles and responsibilities of partners and signed by the head of each partnering organization(if a partnership application)
4. Narrative Response (No more than 4 pages)
5. **Curriculum Outline** (use template provided)
- 6. Budget and Budget Narrative (Excel document)**
7. Organization Chart
- 8. Fiscal Questionnaire**
9. If applicable, current Determination Letter from IRS verifying the organization is exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3)
10. Certificate of Good Standing (from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue at www.mass.gov/dor)
 - a. Bidders who do not pay taxes in Massachusetts shall submit a certificate of good standing or other similar documentation from a state regulatory agency indicating that the bidder is current on tax payments and filings.
- 11. Signed Statement of Compliance and Disclaimer**

B. General Instructions

Applicants must follow these general instructions when preparing and submitting their responses:

- Submit response as a single PDF document, except for Budget and Budget Narrative, which should be submitted in EXCEL format
- 8 1/2 x 11 letter size paper
- Numbered pages
- One inch margins
- Single-spaced
- Minimum 11 point font

C. Narrative Questions

In no more than six single-spaced pages, please respond to the following questions. Please be detailed and specific, but limit responses to information necessary to answer each question sufficiently.

1) Organizational Structure and Capacity

Please describe your organization's history, staffing structure, experience, and capacity to deliver the proposed services. In particular, please address your experience with each of the services listed in the "Scope of Work" section. Please address the following in your response:

- *How long your organization has been in existence and how long it has been providing job readiness services*
- *How do the services described in this application fit into your overall organization structure*
- *Experience and qualifications of staff who will deliver the services and manage the contracts*
- *Staffing structure.*

2) Past Experience and Performance

Please describe two specific grants you recently managed related to job readiness services; one in which you met or exceeded performance expectations, and one in which you experienced challenges meeting performance expectations. Please include the following information in your responses:

- *name of the funding agency/organization and the source of funds*
- *amount of funds*
- *period of performance*
- *number of participants*
- *how you measured the success of your program*
- *specific performance data, and*
- *how you addressed challenges faced.*

In addition to the two examples, you may include any other information related to your past experience and performance that is relevant to this RFA.

3) Experience with Target Communities

Please describe your experience and expertise delivering services to local residents of the communities in which you propose to deliver services and are the target of this RFA.

4) Program Design

Please describe your program design, including processes for:

- *Outreaching to the target population*
- *Assessing and enrolling participants*
- *Supporting participants while in the course*
- *Placing graduates into employment*
- *Ensuring a minimum of 30-day job retention for placed graduates*

5) Grants and fiscal systems management

Please describe your organization's grants management and fiscal management systems and practices. Please address how your organization has the grants and fiscal management expertise to manage these funds and execute a cost reimbursement contract.

6) Curriculum Outline

Please attach a curriculum outline for the 40-hour job readiness course you would deliver if selected as one of the providers. Please use the template provided in Attachment E. Does not count towards the 6-page narrative maximum.

D. Budget Instructions

The budget should be submitted in Excel format utilizing the provided template.

General instructions for completing the budget form:

- 1) "BUDGET SUMMARY" tab- This tab summarizes the figures from the other tabs.
 - a. Fill in organization name in cell B/C/D/E (4).
 - b. Check which courses you are applying for.
 - c. All other fields auto-populate.

- 2) "BUDGET REQUEST" tab-
 - a. Salary and Fringe- list each individual staff person and their rate of pay and hours budgeted to the project. For fringe, please list the individual components, i.e. 20% healthcare, 5% disability, etc. under the "Description of use of funds" column.
 - b. Other Program Costs- fill in each line item as necessary.
 - c. Contracted Services- list each third-party contractor and the services they will be providing.
 - d. Indirect Costs- indirect costs cannot exceed 10% of Budget Sub-total.

7. LIMITATIONS, DISCLAIMERS, AND ASSURANCES

A. Limitations

The Metro North REB shall not pay for any costs incurred by the applicant agencies in the completion of this RFA. Submission of an RFA does not in any way obligate the Metro North REB to award a contract. The Metro North REB reserves the right to accept or reject any applications, to negotiate with all qualified sources, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFA. The Metro North REB reserves the right to correct any error(s) and/or make changes to this solicitation as it deems necessary. The Metro North REB may require successful applicants to participate in contract negotiations prior to contract finalization. The Metro North REB shall reserve the right to withdraw or reduce the amount of an award or to terminate, with or without cause, any contract entered into as a result of this RFA process.

B. Disclaimers

All contract awards by the Metro North REB, pursuant to this RFA, are contingent upon the availability of funds. Respondents are liable for any and all costs incurred prior to final authorization by the Metro North REB and the execution of a contract with the Metro North REB.

The REB also reserves the right to:

- Rescind an award and/or reallocate the funding to another applicant should the successful respondent fail to execute its grant agreement in a timely fashion;
- Increase funding levels for any or all agencies selected pursuant to this RFA, if additional funds become available, based on agency performance, effectiveness and other details;
- Change and amend as necessary its policies or procedures governing the delivery or scope of services described herein;
- Perform an assessment of the risk that any recent, current, or potential litigation, court action, investigation, audit, bankruptcy, receivership, financial insolvency, merger, acquisition, or other event might have on an organization's ability to operate a proposed program.

C. Right to File an Appeal

After the Metro North REB completes its review of all proposals submitted in response to this RFA, the REB will notify all applicants in writing of the status of their proposal and whether or not they have been selected. Parties who submit proposals that are not selected may appeal the decision of the REB in accordance with the applicable provisions of this RFA. Appeals may only be based upon a claim that the REB has failed in any material respect to follow the selection process outlined in this RFA. As stated in the RFA, the REB is not obligated to select a proposal that receives the highest score based upon the application of the proposal review scoring criteria. Applicants may be selected based upon a more comprehensive review and analysis that shall take into account the results of the proposal review scoring criteria, interviews, if conducted, geographic access, and the overall qualifications of the party submitting the proposal. Generalized allegations of impropriety or dissatisfaction with the results of the process are not grounds for appeal.

An unsuccessful bidder who wishes to appeal a decision must file an appeal in writing within 10 business days of the date of Metro North REB's notice to unsuccessful proposers. The appeal statement must fully state in writing the grounds for the appeal in detail and shall be based solely upon the alleged failure of the REB to follow in any material respect the selection process outlined in this RFA. Appeal request statements must be sent by overnight mail or delivered in person. Appeals of the funding decision may be filed with Jillian Ende, Local Complaint Officer, Metro North REB, 186 Alewife Brook Parkway, Suite 216, Cambridge, MA 02138. The Local Complaint Officer shall issue a decision to grant an appeal, deny an appeal, or modify an award within 20 business days of receipt of the appeal.

D. Disallowed Costs and Cancellations

Successful bidders must accept liability for all aspects of programs conducted under contract with the Metro North REB. Successful bidders will be liable for any disallowed costs or illegal expenditures of funds or program operations conducted. The Metro North REB reserves the right to cancel or alter an award if new state or federal regulations or policy makes it necessary to change the program purpose or content substantially, or to prohibit such a program.

E. Contracting

The contract award will not be final until the Metro North REB and the bidder have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement. No program activity may begin prior to the Metro North REB approval of the award and execution of an award letter and/or contractual agreement between the successful bidder and the Metro North REB. Reductions in the funding level of any contract resulting from this solicitation process may be considered during the contract period when a bidder fails to meet expenditure, participant, and/or outcome goals specified in the contract or when anticipated funding is not forthcoming from federal or state governments. The REB reserves the right to determine both the number and the funding levels of contracts finally awarded. Such determination will depend upon overall fund availability and other factors arising during the proposal review process.

F. Cost and Negotiations

The Metro North REB reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received and to negotiate with any and all offers on modifications to proposals. Bids submitted which are over the maximum amount of funds specified for this RFA will be rejected. The proposal warrants that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFA are not in excess of those that would be charged any other individual for the same services performed by the bidder.

G. Modification of Contracts

Any contract awarded pursuant to this RFA may be unilaterally modified by the Metro North REB upon written notice to the contractor under the following circumstances:

1. Contractor fails to meet performance and service expectations set forth in the contract, or
2. The federal or state government increases, reduces or withdraws funds allocated to the Metro North REB, which impact services solicited under this RFA, or
3. There is a change in federal or state legislation and/or their regulations, local laws, or applicable policies and procedures.

8. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Cover Page**
- B. Partnership Form**
- C. Fiscal Questionnaire**
- D. Statement of Compliance and Disclaimer Form**
- E. Curriculum Outline Form**

Attachment A

Cover Page

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Legal Name Of Applicant Agency | | |
| Number of Years In Business | | |
| FEIN Number | | |
| DUNS Number | | |
| Type of Organization <i>(Check all that apply. If a consortium/partnership application, select based on lead applicant)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Institution of higher education <input type="checkbox"/> Community-based organization <input type="checkbox"/> ABE/ESOL/Job Training provider <input type="checkbox"/> Non-traditional public school, e.g., night or adult school, career or technical education school <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce intermediary <input type="checkbox"/> Business organization, i.e. chamber of commerce <input type="checkbox"/> Labor organization | |
| Applying For: | <u>Job Readiness Services</u> <i>(check all that apply)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Everett <input type="checkbox"/> Malden <input type="checkbox"/> Chelsea <input type="checkbox"/> Revere | |
| Principal of Agency – CEO/Executive Director/President | Name | |
| | Title | |
| | Address | |
| | Email Address | |
| | Phone | |
| Programmatic Contact Person | Name | |
| | Title | |
| | Address | |
| | Email Address | |
| | Phone | |
| Fiscal Contact Person | Name | |
| | Title | |
| | Email Address | |
| | Phone | |
| Total Amount Requested | \$ | |

Attachment C

Fiscal Questionnaire

| | | |
|--|---------|--------|
| Is the agency a not-for-profit entity? | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| Is the agency subject to the A-133 Single Audit requirement (Federal funding of \$750,000 or more effective with fiscal years starting January 1, 2015 and forward)? | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| Does the agency do its own accounting? If no, indicate the name and address of the accounting firm below. | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| Name: | | |
| Address: | | |
| Contact Person: | | |
| Phone Number: | | |
| | | |
| Does the agency have a current financial procedures manual? | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| If yes, how often is it reviewed and updated? | | |
| Does the agency have a written cost allocation plan? If yes, please submit | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| Does the agency have an approved Indirect Cost Rate by a cognizant agency? If yes, please submit | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| Does the agency have a conflict of interest policy? | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| | | |
| How often is a trial balance prepared? | | |
| | | |
| <i>Accounting System Disbursements/Reconciliation</i> | | |
| Are all disbursements made by check? | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| Are all checks pre-numbered? | ___ Yes | ___ No |
| Who is authorized to sign checks? Please indicate name and title(s). | | |
| How often is the bank reconciliation prepared? | | |
| | | |
| Please provide the name and length of engagement. | | |
| Name: | | |
| Length of Engagement: | | |

Attachment D

Statement of Compliance and Disclaimer Form

As the authorized signatory official for: _____

I hereby certify:

- That the above-named respondent is legally authorized to submit this application;
- That the above-named respondent does hereby agree to execute all work related to this application in accordance with the requirements of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission, Metro North Regional Employment Board, municipalities providing matching funds, and any other funding source supporting the services procured in this RFA;
- That the above named respondent will ensure special efforts to prevent fraud and other program abuses, such as but not limited to, deceitful practices, intentional misconduct, willful misrepresentation, and improper conduct which may or may not be fraudulent in nature; and
- That the above named respondent will abide to all limitations, assurances, and disclaimers listed in the RFA; and
- That the contents of the application are truthful and accurate and the above named respondent agrees to comply with the policies stated in this application and that this application represents a firm request subject only to mutually agreeable negotiations; and that the above named respondent is in agreement that the Metro North REB reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal for funding; and that the above-named respondent has not been debarred or suspended from receiving federal grants, contracts, or assistance; and that the above-named respondent waives any right to claims against the members and staff of the Metro North Regional Employment Board.

Typed Name of Authorized Representative

Title of Authorized Representative

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date

