

MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

FY'2010 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Out of School Youth Training

Request for Proposals

12/14/2009

This Request for Proposals is being released by the Division of Grants Administration as fiscal and procurement agent for the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board. The Division of Grants Administration is located at 439 South Union Street, Building #2, Suite 106, Lawrence, MA 01843

**MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FISCAL YEAR 2010 WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) OUT OF SCHOOL
YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAMS**

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PART II

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

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- Attachment B: Growth Industries and Jobs in Industrial Sectors
- Attachment C: Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan
- Attachment D: Technical Package Information and Requirements

PART III

PROPOSAL CONTENTS (FORMS FOR SUBMISSION):

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- Proposal Summary Sheet
- Body of Proposal
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Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Workforce Investment Act Fiscal Year 2010

OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAMS

I. Background

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) and the Merrimack Valley Youth Council are seeking proposals from interested parties to provide employment and training services to WIA eligible (See Section XI) Out of School youth from the following 15 cities and towns, collectively known as the Lower Merrimack Valley region: Andover, Amesbury, Boxford, Groveland, Georgetown, Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury and West Newbury. The Lower Merrimack Valley region has a culturally diverse client population that includes the following significant service groups: public assistance recipients, limited English speakers, individuals with disabilities, high school dropouts, and offenders.

Bidders will need to comply with current and amended federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies including those set forth by USDOL, the Mass Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Division of Career Services and others. In particular, the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act and its Final Rule and the decisions made by the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) will be the most relevant documents governing these funds.

II. Geographic Areas

This Request for Proposals (RFP) encompasses services to the cities and towns of the Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area. Individuals to be served with these funds must be residents of the following cities and towns:

Amesbury, Andover, Boxford, Groveland, Georgetown, Methuen, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury and the two Gateway Cities of Haverhill and Lawrence.

III. Available Funds/Funding Period

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) has set aside approximately \$280,000 in WIA Youth funding for education and occupational skills training programs which will prepare and, upon completion transition Out of School Youth into full time unsubsidized employment. It is expected that multiple projects will be funded throughout the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment region.

At a minimum, each Out of School Youth program design is required to provide a program that operates a maximum of 12 months. This RFP is designed to select providers for service provision for up to two (2) years of service; however, the second year of funding will be contingent upon a performance review of the program and receipt of federal funds. Programs are recommended to be designed with program services available May 2010, with outreach and recruitment occurring in March and April, 2010, however, programs will be considered with a later start date. To clarify, the provision of services should be in line with the outcomes/goals of the funding. Programs with multiple cycles will be considered as long as the youth program exits, related credential attainments, and employments occur within the program year. The MVWIB will entertain other timeframes if comprehensive activities are presented and meet the requirement of review prior to determination of a second year of funding. We expect providers to present a program design and timeframe that is reasonable based on the target population, the program design, and the defined program outcomes.

All contract awards are subject to the availability of funds, and are contingent upon successful contract negotiations. Funding is for group education and occupational skills training programming only.

IV. Purpose

The goal of this Request for Proposals is to provide WIA Out of School youth with educational services (ABE, ESOL, and GED) and occupational skills training for employment in a Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board identified critical or emerging industry, resulting in a nationally recognized (industry recognized) credential and the obtainment of unsubsidized employment in a training related occupation.

The MVWIB is seeking providers who will singularly or collaboratively provide these targeted **Out of School Youth Educational and Occupational Skills programs** within the Lower Merrimack Valley region as described above. Private profit or non-profit firms and public organizations are encouraged to apply. Please note that program services may be provided at locations within or outside of the region, if generally accessible to its residents.

Program Design Considerations:

Through this RFP the Merrimack Valley WIB is seeking a range of education and occupational skills training services and programs which are innovative and designed to meet the needs of both jobseekers and employers in today's changing economy.

Programs developed through this RFP should be designed to provide training for individuals in a group occupational skill acquisition program for a specific job or jobs. These programs must incorporate an educational component and a work experience component at a minimum. Group training can incorporate a number of sequential activities which lead to employment in a particular area. Specifically:

- Programs funded through this solicitation will allow applicant proposals to identify specific eligible Out of School Youth populations and specific entrance requirements for the proposed training.
- ABE/GED/and/or ESOL educational remediation **must** be incorporated within the program design.
- The programs **must include** the attainment of national and/or industry recognized skill or educational credentials obtained as a result of the occupational skill activity within the 12 program months.
- Applicant proposals **must demonstrate** the active involvement of employers in the design and operation of the program utilizing the Occupational Skills Program Employer Survey provided in the Response Section of this RFP.
- Targeted industries and occupations identified as part of the MVWIB Strategic Planning process, employer meetings and surveys will be given priority consideration for funding. (List of industries, occupations in Attachment B).
- A work experience component **must** be included as part of the program design.

V. Program Design Guidelines:

Organizations responding to this RFP should describe an education and occupational skills training program which meets the following guidelines:

1. Enrollments/Cycles:

- ◆ Applicant proposals must indicate enrollment goals of target population(s). The MVWIB may choose to fund programs at lower or higher enrollment levels than those proposed.
- ◆ Programs are recommended to be designed with program services available May 2010, with outreach and recruitment occurring in March and April, 2010.

2. Program Components:

- ◆ Outreach/Recruitment Plan (coordinated with ValleyWorks Career Center).
- ◆ A combination of Education and Occupational Skills Training.
- ◆ Attainment of National and/or Industry recognized skill or educational credential.
- ◆ If a certification is required to obtain employment in the training occupation this certification must occur during the training period and associated costs if any, incorporated into the costs per participant.
- ◆ A Work Experience Component
- ◆ Job Development and Placement in training related area.
- ◆ Evidence of employer involvement and partnerships.

3. Program Components Detail:

The primary goals of this Request for Proposals are to fund programs which provide WIA Out of School Youth with education and occupational skills training for employment in a Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board identified critical or emerging industry and programs which

comprehensively address both the lack of a GED or credential and/or basic skills deficiency and the need for strong occupational skills training.

THE FOLLOWING PROGRAM COMPONENTS ARE REQUIRED IN THE PROPOSED OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH PROGRAMS:

- a. **Education** [defined as English as a Second Language (ESL) or Remediation or GED Preparation], offered as a secondary school alternative.
- b. **Occupational Skills Training**, targeting training in one of the MVWIB Identified growth industries and jobs as listed in Attachment B, or in demand occupations which cross industries as described in the applicant's proposal, or in an industry with which the applicant has strong ties and the ability to form partnerships sufficient to provide program participants with employer-driven occupational skills training which meets the long-term needs of these employers and results in placement for participants.
- c. **Work experience**, limited to paid or unpaid work experience, including internships or job shadowing, with the goal of providing the trainee with hands-on application of the attained occupational skills competencies. Work experience may be in private, for-profit or non-profit sectors, or the public sector, and activities may include:
 - i. Instruction in employability skills or generic workplace skills such as those identified in the Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan (Attachment C);
 - ii. Exposure to various aspects of an industry;
 - iii. Progressively more complex tasks;
 - iv. Integration of basic academic skills into work activities;
 - v. Supported work adjustment, and other transitional activities;
 - vi. Other elements designed to achieve the goals of work experience.

The following components are optional, though strongly encouraged if they can be shown to be value-added:

Leadership development, requiring the following: Organizational and Teamwork training; training in decision-making; Employability skills training, comprised of key employment soft skills including positive job attitude and work skills. Methodologies and activities which may be utilized as opportunities to encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors, and to accomplish required Leadership development goals including:

- i. Exposure to postsecondary educational opportunities;
- ii. Community service learning projects;
- iii. Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
- iv. Organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training;
- v. Training in decision-making, including determining priorities;
- vi. Citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting, work behavior training, and budgeting of resources;
- vii. Employability;
- viii. Positive social behaviors, which are outcomes of leadership development opportunities, often referred to as soft skills, which may include, but are not

limited to positive attitudinal development, self-esteem building, cultural diversity training, and work simulation activities, maintaining healthy lifestyles, maintaining commitment to learning and academic success, avoiding delinquency, postponed and responsible parenting, and positive job attitudes and work skills.

Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

Support Services: services, non-financial in nature, which may include the following:

- i. Linkages to community services;
- ii. Referral and linkages with accessing transportation;
- iii. Referral and linkages with child care and dependent care;
- iv. Referral and linkages with housing; and
- v. Referrals and linkages to medical services

Follow-Up Services: defined as the provision of services for a minimum of twelve (12) months to program exiters which may include:

- i. Leadership development service, primarily assistance in accessing post-secondary education;
- ii. Employability and retention services: including but not limited to regular contact with employed youth and assistance in addressing work-related problems;
- iii. Guidance and Counseling;
- iv. Assistance in securing better paying jobs and career development; and
- v. Connection to other support services, including the ValleyWorks Career Center.

Adult mentoring, and

Summer activities, combining remediation and academic enrichment with work experience or employment-related components. These activities may be a continuation of, or an expansion of, or a different version of non-summer (year-round) activities. They may occur either at the beginning or the end of the program contingent on appropriate program design.

4. Educational Remediation:

- ◆ The educational curriculum should be closely related to the skills training activity and job goal.
- ◆ Incorporated educational remediation must demonstrate a connection to the actual skill(s) training provided and meet the requirements of actual jobs available through the training.
- ◆ Occupational skill trainers are encouraged to collaborate with education providers to provide this training.
- ◆ Educational remediation should be designed to operate concurrently within the training activity or as short term intensive remediation necessary before an individual can meet entrance requirements for training.

5. Employability Competency Attainment Prior to Work Experience:

Applicant proposals are required to design an employability soft skills component which all enrollees must attend and successfully complete prior to placement into the work experience component. This requirement must at a minimum incorporate the competencies outlined in the Foundation Skills of the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (Attachment C) as follows:

Work Ethic and Professionalism:

Skill:

Attendance and Punctuality
Workplace Appearance
Accepting Direction and Constructive Criticism
Motivation and Taking Initiative
Understanding Workplace Culture, Policy, and Safety

Communication and Interpersonal Skills:

Speaking
Listening
Interacting with Co-Workers

Additional information about these competency areas is attached (Attachment C).

No enrollee will participate in any work experience component unless and until they have successfully completed this component. The results must be documented in their individual case file.

6. Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan:

Programs should develop and implement curricula consistent with the skills identified in the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (WBL Plan). The WBL Plan matches participants' assigned tasks to described individual and team skills and correlates participant achievement to competency gains necessary for success in the workplace.

Programs will be required to implement and utilize the Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan in their work experience component (Attachment C).

7. Work Experience Component:

Programs must incorporate the following local MVWIB requirements within the work experience component:

- a. Subsidized employment is to be used as a stepping stone to unsubsidized work experience; and
- b. Programs must provide a Basic Computer Skills component within the employability skills design. Competencies should be focused on attainment of basic skills in the following areas:
 1. Keyboarding;
 2. Word Processing;
 3. Spreadsheets;
 4. And Use of Internet and Email

Basic computer skills are vital in today's workplace, and introduction to the above is considered a baseline employability skill. These skills are also vital in job search activities. Programs designs must document the attainment of competencies in the above areas. Additionally, opportunities for hands-on practice should be incorporated into the work experience and/or employability components.

8. Occupational Skills Training.

Programs must incorporate an occupational skills training component with the goal of training-related employment following graduation and attainment of at least one occupational skills credential/certificate. The region's *Growth* Industries and Jobs as identified by the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) are outlined in Attachment B.

If programs select another industry, or an occupational area which could have training related placement across industries, strong labor market justification will be required. All programs presented must document labor needs by local/regional employers.

9. Recognitions

Incentives and recognitions are allowable if the design meets the following guidelines: Recognitions cannot exceed 5% of WIA budget funds; the plan for providing incentives and recognitions must be comprehensive, recognizing both participation achievement and/or excellence; and the rewards are for as many youth as possible. The Recognition component includes graduation ceremonies in addition to any incentives.

10. Employer Connection

Evidence must be provided of a strong employer connection. This must be documented in two ways:

- First, evidence of employer review and input into program design and curriculum development; and
- Second, layered employer connections with the program. As different employers are willing to offer different levels of commitment to programs, prospective

providers are strongly encouraged to obtain as many commitments of various levels from as many employers as possible. The employer connection will be reviewed for real commitments as follows:

- a. Willingness to participate in program (vocational discussions; leadership development; speaking to students and/or providing site tours);
- b. Willingness to provide internships;
- c. Willingness to provide job shadowing opportunities;
- d. Commitment to interview program participants; and
- e. Commitment to hire successful program completers.

Programs will be evaluated both on the varying level of commitments and the number of employers participating.

Documentation is to include the Employer Survey and letters outlining the commitment of individual employers as attachments to the proposal.

11. Program Hours

Programs must be at least 20 hours per week.

12. Student/Teacher Ratio

Student/teacher ratio must be 12:1 or lower. Volunteers to assist regular instructional staff may be utilized to achieve this ratio, if a volunteer program exists which provides training and supervision to volunteers.

13. Start/End Dates and Program Length

Programs should be designed to start on or after March 2010, with completion dates in line with the length of program necessary to obtain the skills necessary for placement into unsubsidized employment in the critical or emerging industry. Programs can be designed with multiple cycles as long as youth exit and enter employment within the program year. If subsequent cycles are funded, they will serve other youth.

Programs must be designed to operate within a maximum of twelve months (one calendar year); however, the funded programs may be extended through to a second full program year, dependent upon a performance review. This review will include any historical outcomes, current status review from Career Counselors, monitoring reports, and possibly site visits, interviews and results of youth surveys.

Programs with multiple cycles will be considered as long as the youth program exits and employments occur within the program year. The MVWIB will entertain other timeframes if comprehensive activities are presented and meet the requirement of review prior to determination of a second year of funding. We expect providers to present a program design and timeframe that

is reasonable based on the target population, the program design, and the defined program outcomes.

14. ValleyWorks Career Center Counseling Component.

The class schedule should be designed to accommodate the ValleyWorks Career Center counseling component. As a general guideline, the Youth Career Counselors should have access to participants for two hours a week, either through a set-aside time period or during a study period from which clients may be withdrawn for individual counseling.

15. Competency Verification.

Upon funding approval, program providers must obtain DGA approval of testing instruments to be used to measure educational competencies, if different from the testing conducted by the ValleyWorks Career Center Youth Department. Providers will be required to submit a list of testing instruments, or for relatively unknown tests, to provide copies of tests. DGA and providers will agree to the pre- and post-testing schedule, understanding that ValleyWorks and the providers may utilize different testing instruments. Youth Career Counselors will verify educational competency attainment. Youth Career Counselors will also evaluate client attainment of Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan (WBL Plan) skills using the WBL Plan and through additional post testing for verification and measurement of academic and workplace competency increases. The WBL Plan (Attachment C) links the learning standards from the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks with the skills competencies required in the workplace. The WBL Plan serves as a tool to create a system that helps youth reach academic and workplace expectations simultaneously.

Providers must submit documentation of all certification and credential attainment by enrollees. This documentation must be submitted in a timely way to the VWCC Youth Department.

16. Budget:

- ◆ All costs related to materials, equipment, books, uniforms, testing fees, etc. required of participants should be incorporated within the program budget.

17. Subcontracts:

- ◆ Any services to be subcontracted to another provider must receive prior approval from the MVWIB and the Division of Grants Administration. For collaborative program models the lead entity must submit a copy of the collaboration agreement within the proposal.

VI. Positive Outcomes:

For participants within programs funded through this solicitation there is only one positive outcome:

Entered full time employment in a training related occupation at a negotiated minimum wage with retention for 30 days.

All outcomes must occur within 90 days of the last service received by the enrollee.

VII. Partner Responsibilities:

In keeping with the spirit of an open and competitive procurement process, this RFP contains guidelines for allowable training activities and related services but does not prescribe costs, mixes of services or other specific criteria which could limit competition.

It is the purpose of this RFP to award funds to multiple bidders whose proposals, including any amendments to the proposal developed through negotiations, are most advantageous to the goals of the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) for the youth it serves.

The MVWIB will be responsible for:

- ◆ Program promotion and technical assistance.
- ◆ Oversight and evaluation of WIA Out of School Youth Training programs.
- ◆ Final evaluation and reporting to the WIA funding source.

The ValleyWorks Career Center (VWCC) will be responsible for:

- ◆ Assistance with outreach and recruitment of program participants.
- ◆ Eligibility determination including collecting enrollment information, eligibility documents, and determining WIA Out of School Youth eligibility of program participants.
- ◆ Initial assessment to determine employability needs and appropriate placement.
- ◆ Ongoing case management of program participants.
- ◆ Data entry and state required MOSES report generation for the partners.
- ◆ Job Placement Assistance
- ◆ Assistance in the final evaluation and reporting for the WIA funds.

The City of Lawrence Division of Grants Administration will be responsible for:

- ◆ Acting as fiscal agent for the MVWIB.
- ◆ Procurement and contracting for all WIA Training projects.
- ◆ Project monitoring.
- ◆ Generation of Project monitoring reports for the MVWIB and VWCC.
- ◆ Ongoing compliance review with WIA Requirements.
- ◆ Fiscal technical assistance as necessary or requested.
- ◆ Sub-recipient Fiscal Site monitoring.
- ◆ Payments and invoicing.
- ◆ Assisting in the generation of materials for the evaluation and reporting functions.

- ◆ Assisting in the final evaluation and reporting for the WIA funds.

The partners listed above are in full agreement and are ready to successfully coordinate, operate, and ensure the successful implementation of the funded Out of School Youth Training projects.

VIII. Vendor/Provider Responsibilities:

Potential Vendors/Providers are requested to present program designs that meet the requirements of the WIA funds and the locally determined program elements outlined within this RFP. Respondents to this RFP must agree to the following requirements of funding through this procurement:

- ◆ Providers will coordinate outreach and recruitment activities with the VWCC.
- ◆ Providers must work with the VWCC in the collection of required eligibility documents for participants.
- ◆ **Participants may not be enrolled in program activities until determined eligible by the VWCC.**
- ◆ Providers must maintain a case file for each enrollee. Each enrollee's case file must, at a minimum, contain the following:
 - a. Copies of any Testing Documents and Results
 - b. Copies of Attendance Records
 - c. Supportive service documentation as necessary
 - d. Documentation of participation in activities
 - e. Education or Industry recognized credential documentation
 - f. Documentation of any other skills or competency attainment in line with the program design.
- ◆ Providers must allow the MVWIB/DGA Monitors access as needed to review the program. This review will include case file review, review of activities in line with contracted program design, and fiscal monitoring.
- ◆ Providers must submit all required paperwork per contract requirements.

IX. Other Program Requirements

Program Enrollments:

There are no limits on total enrollments for the program design. However, depending on cost per participant and program design, the MVWIB and DGA reserve the right to fund and contract with programs at higher or lower enrollment levels than those proposed. This will be subject to contract negotiation.

X. Eligible Applicants:

All organizations, agencies and employers interested in and capable of providing an education and occupational skills training program that meet the requirements outlined in this RFP may submit proposals.

XI. Eligible Participant/Information on Target Populations

Eligible Participants

As noted above, the VWCC will be responsible for the eligibility determination of potential participants. Eligibility must be confirmed before a participant is enrolled in the program. Eligibility to participate in programs funded under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is based upon the applicant meeting the WIA Out of School Youth eligibility criteria.

The Workforce Investment Act defines the term “Out of School youth” as follows:

DEFINITION:

An Out of School youth is an individual who:

- a. is an eligible youth who is a school dropout;
- b. is an eligible youth who has either graduated from high school or holds a GED, but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed (WIA Section 101(33)).

Please Note: A school dropout is defined as an individual who is no longer attending any school and who has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent. A youth attending an alternative school or taking college courses is not a dropout.

For Fiscal Year 2010 in the Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area, youth will need to meet all of the following eligibility criteria:

TARGET GROUP: Proposals must target Out-of-School youth who:

- a. **Are age 16 through 21; and**
- b. **A citizen or national of the United States, lawfully admitted permanent resident alien, refugee, asylee, or other immigrant lawfully authorized to work in the United States;**
- c. **In compliance with the Military Selective Service Act;**
- d. **Are low income individuals, as defined in the WIA section 101 (25); and**
- e. **Are within one or more of the following categories:**
 - 1) **Deficient in basic literacy skills – computes or solves problems, reads, writes or speaks English at or below the 8th grade level (8.9);**
 - 2) **School dropout;**
 - 3) **Homeless, runaway, or foster child;**
 - 4) **Pregnant or parenting teen;**
 - 5) **Offender;**
 - 6) **An individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment. (WIA sec. 101(13).)**

States are given the discretion to define when an individual “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment”. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has determined that this term be defined to include an individual that:

- **Is one or more grade levels below his/her age-appropriate grade level; or**
- **Has a disability, including a learning disability; or**
- **Is facing a serious barrier to employment, defined as either an individual who is currently unemployed and has held at least three jobs for less than 45 days each within the last year, or is a state-involved youth.**

Priorities for enrollment into the WIA programming will be WIA eligible youth with multiple barriers.

The region has the ability to approve a limited number of enrollments of individuals who do not meet the low-income guidelines but who do meet the defined barrier eligibility criteria. This will be done on a case by case basis.

Participant Assessment and Assignment

The ValleyWorks Career Center will be responsible for eligibility determination of each customer, which includes the completion of a WIA application, verification of the information provided for the application, collection of required documents, and a determination if the individual who has applied meets the eligibility criteria established by WIA and the MVWIB.

Each individual will undergo a full objective assessment which may include (but is not limited to) a marketability determination, an educational assessment, a review of work history, transferable skills, and an interest assessment. The VWCC staff will be responsible for making a referral to the appropriate program following the completion of the full objective assessment. No client can begin any training program without this referral. The training provider may accept/reject a referred client if they do not meet the entry level requirements of the program or with justification based on the providers' individual assessment.

XII. Contract Terms

A. CONTRACTS:

All contracts will be based on a cost reimbursement system. Please see the Technical Package for Sample Budget/Payment Schedule and information on contracting.

B. COLLABORATING AGENCIES:

If a proposal is submitted with two or more collaborating agencies, the following information must be provided in a letter of agreement/commitment signed by the authorized signatory for each agency: Lead Agent, sub-contractual arrangement, and description of collaboration, description of continuum of services for participants, method for dispute resolution, and any other collaboration history which the agencies may have.

Collaborations must be documented as noted above, even if services from collaborating agencies (non-lead) are being provided on an in-kind basis.

Services must be incorporated in the program design and collaborating agencies should strive for transparency to the participants.

C. BUDGETARY INFORMATION:

Budgets must be submitted on the forms provided. A detailed budget narrative must also be submitted explaining each line item. All budgets will be reviewed based on cost effectiveness and completeness. Post award the DGA fiscal department will work with awarded vendors to finalize budgets utilizing required contract budget forms.

The following limitations apply as they relate to the total budget:

- No more than 5% of the total budget can be charged to Recognition Supplies;
- No more than 10% of the total budget can be charged to administrative overhead as documented with a current approved indirect cost rate; or
- No more than 10% of the total budget can be charged to administrative overhead, as documented by administrative staff, such as accounting, planning, and other administrative oversight.

For FY'10, providers are allowed to document In-Kind services and costs. These costs must be real in-kind services which directly benefit the program and the WIA enrolled youth. Within the program monitoring structure, a review of these services will occur, and documentation will be required at the program level of the in-kind services incorporated into the WIA Out of School Youth program.

D. TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

All contracts will contain WIA/ Terms and Conditions. Prospective providers must agree to terms and conditions as a part of the contracting process. Please review the attached Terms and Conditions for other contract requirements (Please refer to the Technical Package)

E. DGA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

All program providers must agree and follow the DGA Grievance Procedure. Additionally, these procedures must be posted on site at the provider's location, easily accessible to participants. Please see the attached DGA Grievance Procedure (Please refer to the Technical Package).

F. PROVIDER PERSONNEL AND CORI CHECKS

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board requires that providers receiving MVWIB funds have personnel policies and procedures in place

utilizing the Criminal Offender Record Information System. All program providers must certify that their agency has personnel policies in place which utilize the Criminal Offender Record Information system.

G. DISCLAIMER

All funded programs shall be operated in accordance with the rules under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. All programs shall also comply with the State of Massachusetts, MVWIB and DGA rules, regulations, guidelines and procedures. The MVWIB and the DGA reserve the right to modify the scope of the program and requirements to any extent necessary to ensure compliance with State and/or Federal guidelines and goals.

XIII. MVWIB and Proposer's Rights

- A. The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
- B. The proposer has the right of protest and appeal of procurement decisions. Proposers must use the protest and appeal process as outlined in the MVWIB/DGA Workforce Investment Act Grievance Procedures. Please refer to the DGA Grievance Procedures for the appeal process in the Technical Package. Appeals must be based on the Workforce Investment Act and would use the process outlined for complaint.
- C. Following the competitive procurement process, all proposals become public record.

XIV. Proposal Review Criteria

- A. *Prequalification and Financial Documentation:*
Favorable review of the pre-qualification package by DGA's Finance Director is a prerequisite to proposal review. The pre-qualification package includes:
 - Signatory Authorization for Corporate Providers or for Non-Corporate Providers
 - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters
 - Evidence of Commitment to Equal Opportunity, Nondiscrimination, and Affirmative Action, and a Utilization Chart, if available
 - Statement of Commitment to a Drug-Free Workplace
 - Certification of Non-Collusion
 - Certification Regarding Criminal Offender Record System

- Certification of Acceptance of the Technical Package
- Evidence of Current Approved Indirect Cost Rate
- Copy of Lease Agreement or title of ownership of the building and a copy of the most recent tax bill.
- Copy of Most Recent Audit

Note: The annual audit report must be in compliance with OMB Circular A-133, if applicable. Otherwise, an annual audit report from an Independent CPA Firm. OMB Circular A-133 Applies if the entity expends \$300,000 or more a year in federal awards. Under the revised Circular A-133, if the audit period ends after December 31, 2003, the expenditure limit Increases to \$500,000. If the agency is exempt from A-133, please have your authorized Signatory document this in writing to us. The audit report must contain the Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance and Internal Control, the Management Letter, and the Financial Statements.

Bidders whose pre-qualification packages are deemed to be incomplete or questionable following this initial review will be notified by DGA and given an opportunity to complete or correct the items in question within a timeframe that does not interfere with the proposal review schedule.

Bidders unable to respond within the allotted timeframe will be disqualified from the proposal review process.

Proposals will be reviewed by DGA and Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board staff, the MVWIB Youth Council and the Planning Committee of the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) in a tiered process. Final decisions on awarding funds will be made by the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board. If for any reason the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board is unable to make the decisions, the final decision for funding will be made by the Chief Elected Official of the Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area. Final agreement to contract is subject to successful contract negotiation.

Contract negotiations will be time-limited. Prospective providers must review the RFP timeline and commit to making appropriate staff available to facilitate the contract negotiation process.

DGA/MVWIB Staff Proposal Review:

1. Proposals will be reviewed and rated by DGA and MVWIB staff according to a point system. The maximum points to be earned per section are specified in the proposal content forms.
2. Programs will be reviewed for comprehensiveness, cohesiveness, and the ability to attain performance outcomes through the program design presented.
3. Proposals will be reviewed with strong consideration given to overall proposal cost, reasonableness of cost, and effective use of funding.
4. Failure to respond to a specific item or to attach requested material will result in a loss of points.

MVWIB Youth Council Review:

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council Committee will review the following:

- The Proposals; and
- DGA/MVWIB staff ratings, comments, and recommendations for funding;

The Youth Council will then evaluate proposals according to the following additional criteria:

1. Projected effectiveness of proposed training in meeting client needs and the MVWIB program goals as identified in the comprehensive WIA Employment and Training Plan.
2. Contribution to a full range of program services for Out of School youth for FY 2010.
3. Consistency with need for geographic distribution of services corresponding to level of need in the Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area (LMVWIA).
4. Quality of programs proposed by current vendors, based on DGA statistics, monitoring reports, and program evaluations.
5. Consistency with the Lower Merrimack Valley WIA training allocation plan.
6. Cost effectiveness as determined by a cost/price analysis performed by DGA fiscal staff and presented to the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board for consideration.
7. Fiscal viability of proposing agency as evidenced by the fiscal audit.

Interviews with prospective providers may be requested before final recommendations are made.

During this final evaluation by the Youth Council, staff recommendations may be altered based on the above considerations.

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council will then formulate funding recommendations, including slot levels and total program allocations. Funding recommendations will be made in two categories:

- a) Programs confirmed for funding.
- b) Programs contingent upon final determination of funds available. Programs in this category will be notified of final disposition as soon as

possible, with sufficient allowance made for the time required for program start-up activities.

MVWIB Planning Committee Proposal Review:

Final Approval of funding recommendations and comments will be decided by the Workforce Investment Board's Planning Committee and vendors will be notified in February of 2010. The MVWIB and DGA reserve the right to extend these timelines if necessary. DGA will notify all bidders if timelines are extended.

B. Proposals Approved for Funding:

Agencies with proposals approved for funding may be asked to submit the following additional documents:

1. Revised and Complete Budget Forms for the Cost Reimbursement Contract
2. Program Application Forms, Interview Questions, Applicant Evaluation Criteria
3. List of Instructional Materials for Each Class
4. Class Curricula
5. Class Syllabi
6. Organizational Chart
7. New Budget to Reflect Allocation (If Different from Proposed Budget)
8. Anti-Lobbying Disclosure Forms
9. Copies of Insurance Policies and Bonds
10. Staff Job Descriptions
11. List of Members of Advisory Board, if applicable
12. List (Or Copies) of Testing Instruments

XV. Proposal Format

Proposals must be typewritten or word processed on the attached forms. Responding agencies should ensure that their proposals conform to the following requirements:

- A response to each item of the proposal forms is required. Responses should be as concise as possible.

- DGA strongly prefers that bidders adhere to the space allowed in the forms. However, if you must make a lengthier response to a specific item, please insert a page and continue the item response on the inserted page, so that the pagination of the original forms is maintained. **Please do not alter the format of or make inserts to the Proposal Summary Sheet**, since this page is excerpted from the proposal for various purposes.
- Please do not use a font size less than **11 pt** within the Response Forms. Attachments should also utilize 11 pt. if possible, with exceptions allowable for charts, timelines, etc.
- **Please check your proposal for internal consistency.**
- Some sections may require appended material. Failure to enclose this material or to respond to a specific item will result in a loss of points for the section.
- The Cover Sheet and Proposal Summary Sheet must be page one and two of your proposals. **Please order proposal sections according to the attached Proposal Contents Check List.**
- **The Cover Sheet must be signed by the Authorized Signatory of the Lead Agency, as documented through the Authorized Signatory form submitted.**

Proposals must adhere to format provided. If there are any questions please contact Amy Weatherbee, Systems & Planning Director, DGA at 978-722-7002.

XVI. Proposal Submission

The submission must consist of **AN UNBOUND ORIGINAL AND SIX (6) BOUND COPIES**. Failure to submit the unbound original and six (6) bound copies will result in disqualification. The original **MUST** contain the signature of your agency signatory. All proposals must incorporate completed proposal summary sheets and required forms.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE RFP FORMAT MAY RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION.

PROPOSALS ARE DUE ON FEBRUARY 1, 2010 NO LATER THAN 2:00 P.M.

AT

**DIVISION OF GRANTS ADMINISTRATION
c/o VALLEYWORKS CAREER CENTER
439 South Union Street, Building # 2, Suite # 106
Lawrence, MA 01843**

Delivery of proposals is the sole responsibility of the proposer. The transmission of proposals by fax is not permitted. It is the sole responsibility of the bidder to ensure that proposals are received at the proper location, prior to the stated deadline. Some transportation lines are congested, and visitors or on-street parking can at times be difficult to obtain. Proposals will be logged in and stamped with the time and date of receipt. Bidders should plan accordingly for timely proposal delivery. The **2:00 p.m.** deadline will be strictly enforced. Proposals or any parts thereof received after the required date and time will not be accepted and will be rejected as non-responsive to the Request for Proposals.

There will be a Bidders' Conference on Friday, December 18th at 2:00 p.m. at the Valley Works Career Center, 439 South Union Street, Building #2, Suite # 106, Lawrence, MA 01843. The proposal will have been released and the Bidders' Conference will be geared toward clarification of submission requirements and local priorities. All interested parties are invited to attend, although attendance is not mandatory.

Please note that to maintain a competitive bidding process, substantive question (e.g., concerning program design) arising during the proposal preparation period will be addressed only during the Technical Assistance period. No program design questions will be addressed following the release of the RFP. Technical assistance (e.g., clarification on completion of the proposal document) will be available throughout the proposal preparation period by contacting Amy Weatherbee, DGA Systems and Planning Director via email: aweatherbee@detma.org or (978) 722-7002. Questions will be entertained up through January 8th, 2010, and responses will be posted on the MVWIB website, www.mvwib.org.