
***Request for Proposals
For Technical Training Services
Career Counseling and Workforce Development***

Closing Date and Time for Proposal Submittal – March 23, 2021 by 4 pm CST

Contact Information – Marlene Nagel, Community Development Director mnagel@marc.org

BACKGROUND

I. MARC Organizational Structure

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) is the metropolitan planning organization and association of city and county governments serving the bi-state Kansas City region. It is a public, non-profit agency. MARC serves nine counties with 119 cities, including Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri, and Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties in Kansas.

MARC was formed in 1972 and is governed by a 33-member board of directors composed of city and county elected officials. In addition to the board, MARC has dozens of policy, technical and advisory committees and decision-making entities overseeing its work and providing important and diverse stakeholder involvement. This series of committees and working groups enables MARC to engage a diverse array of community interests and representatives from often under-represented constituencies.

MARC has received a grant from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to assist unemployed and underemployed residents with career counseling, training and employment search services to help them and our community recover from the COVID-19 public health and economic disaster. MARC is working with community partners to increase the capacity of workforce and community organizations to support those needing job skill training and employment services. Case managers serving unemployed and underemployed adults with employment services need training on how to help adults assess their strengths, skill gaps, career goals and training/education interests. Grant #05-79-06096 – 11.307 Economic Adjustment Assistance CARES Act Recovery Assistance Supplemental). MARC has budgeted \$30,000 for the requested training services.

II. Project Description and Training Content

Workforce System Coordination and Capacity Building

Overall, our strategy is to strengthen the capacity of agencies providing workforce development services in the bi-state region. For the purposes of this grant-funded program, our work will focus on serving Wyandotte County, Kansas. The agencies we will work with include, but not be limited to, the public workforce board on the Kansas side, Workforce Partnership. This workforce board serves unemployed and underemployed individuals in a three-county area. Workforce Partnership also

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coordinates with the agencies serving targeted populations such as veterans, adults with disabilities, public assistance recipients (TANF and SNAP), basic adult education and English as a second language participants, and re-entering populations. Our regional workforce system also includes faith-based, nonprofit, and community organizations that provide services to assist individuals with training and employment.

Our goals are to 1) provide reliable, consistent information to all agencies regarding job opportunities and the skills and credentials needed; 2) provide opportunities for organizations to collaborate, share resources, and make referrals across agencies as needed, 3) provide small technical assistance grants through a competitive RFP to # small nonprofit agencies, 4) provide access to career guidance tools such as The Agile Work Profiler that helps people discover their skills and abilities, work strengths and career and occupational opportunities in the Kansas City area, 5) provide training dollars to help individuals access training, earn credentials/ including certificates, and employment, and 6) provide professional development opportunities for workforce agency staff. Ultimately, our goal is that the region, and Wyandotte County specifically, will have organizations that have improved capacity to help more individuals gain sustainable employment.

Desired Services - Case Manager Training Content

In order to ensure that case management staff at Workforce Partnership and with community organizations are able to fully assist clients seeking training and education, career and employment advice, a training series will be designed and offered over the next 18 months.

The training will provide the case managers with up-to-date economic and workforce labor market information to help clients in understanding opportunities for job openings, career pathways, required job skills and experiences, and resources to support initial and ongoing training and education.

The training contractor will work with MARC and the program partners to design a series of short modules and deliver each module for training to a limited audience. The modules would be recorded to support ongoing use over the project's 18-month timeframe. MARC encourages the selected contractor to review and utilize public video training content where appropriate to meet the required deliverables. Such public video training may include information from the US Department of Labor or other federal, state or local sources (<https://www.careeronestop.org/Videos/video-library.aspx>).

The content will include:

- Data-driven forecasts on what sectors and occupations will be in high demand as the Kansas City area economy continues to recover and those sectors and occupations that will have steady or substantial growth and in demand and the wage scales on each rung on the career path for these high demand occupations including any required educational credentials (***MARC will produce this information for the training contractor***).
- Details on the skill sets required of the occupations that will be in highest demand during economic recovery – our competency “demand” (***MARC will work with the training contractor on this information***)

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- Detailed crosswalks from the skills in hand to the skills needed resulting in an understanding of what occupations might be best for those unemployed who wish to shift to a new position – including the training that might be necessary to fill in any competency gaps to pivot to new in-demand careers.
- Training on how to help unemployed and underemployed residents evaluate their skills and interests for in-demand jobs and careers and determine what training would be needed to make them capable of applying for, securing, and maintaining employment. In addition, the training for case managers should be to help them become fully capable of helping job seekers explore career pathways where an initial job with ongoing training and education could help them move into other more highly compensated positions over time. It is expected that this training content will be divided up into up to three brief modules. Possible module subject matter might include (1) how to review and use economic forecasts and labor market data to understand both current job openings but how advising clients might help them think about career pathways; (2) how to help a client assess their work-related skills and work/career interests to help them consider in-demand jobs, what career pathways the jobs might open up for them and what training might be needed and how to best proceed); and (3) how to coach job seekers on creating an individual career pathway plan for themselves, including what ongoing training/education would help them fully realize their goals. ***(Primary focus of training contractor).***
- Coordinate training alongside The DeBruce Foundation to help navigators and case managers understand the Agility Advantage framework and how to use the Agilities tools and resources. The Agile Work Profiler (www.agilities.org) and related Career Explorer Tools comprise an online platform developed by DeBruce Foundation, a national foundation focused on economic empowerment. The tool is free to all users and allows individuals to assess their career interests and skills and explore different occupations that align with those skills including what skills they may need to grow. The DeBruce Foundation analyzed US Bureau of Labor Statistic data on approximately 1,000 occupations. (This spans across nearly 60,000 distinct job titles in the American economy, the data being periodically collected from 30,000 participants.) This approach has been replicated across decades of data and brings new ways to approach workforce opportunities and education in real time and for the future. ***DeBruce Foundation personnel will deliver the Agilities training and work with the Contractor to align training content related to exploring career pathways.***

MARC has access to an online Learning Management System to make the delivery of this training efficient for the training contractor. MARC would ideally like to record the training events so that they may be available to those case managers not able to attend the training sessions. The contractor selected would need to work with MARC to ensure that there are no restrictions for the use of any video used and made available through the LMS.

Timeframe for development and delivery of training

Time is of the essence. MARC desires to select the training contractor and enter into agreement with the selected contractor by the end of April and for the contractor to immediately begin work and complete the design of the training curriculum within 60 to 75 days. The training would be delivered on two

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occasions. The first delivery of the training would be with a group of workforce case managers who would provide feedback on the training. Following the feedback, any needed changes would be made and a second class would be conducted with the training modules recorded to allow for future use. The recorded training modules would be available no later than July 31, 2021.

VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

The vendor must have:

- Demonstrated experience and success in providing training to community and public agencies serving disadvantaged populations, particularly unemployed and underemployed residents who are economically challenged.
- Knowledge of training content required to increase knowledge and skills of workforce case managers in working with unemployed or underemployed residents
- Experience in delivering training content to adult audience
- Ability to comply with EDA federal terms and conditions

I. Submittal Requirements

All proposals should contain the following information in the order in which it appears within this document. Proposals are meant to clearly communicate the potential firm's qualifications for the project and, therefore, should provide information in a clear and concise manner.

- Company Information
 - Company's legal name, address, telephone number, and EIN and DUNS numbers.
 - Number of years in business
 - Number of employees
- Vendor References
 - Provide a minimum of three (3) references of customers for whom you have completed similar services. Include contact names, telephone numbers, and email addresses. Customers listed should preferably be nonprofit or government organizations.
- Description and explanation of how vendor will design and deliver training to workforce case managers:
 - Proposals should describe if the training program exists or if curriculum will be developed, and what if any input is needed from MARC or its project partners
 - Proposals should include course description that pertain to the training described above. Information should include course name and learning objectives; minimum or maximum class size; length of training; how training will be evaluated.
 - Proposals should indicate if there are any reservations or opportunities created by virtual delivery of the courses or if in-person delivery is preferred once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Delivery mechanism with COVID restrictions in place
 - Specify if there are any restrictions to MARC and its partners having the ability to use the curriculum following the conclusion of the contract engagement period.
 - Provide pricing for all fees and charges associated with providing training services.

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II. Questions

All questions regarding this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be directed to Marlene Nagel by email at mnagel@marc.org. Responses to questions will be provided to all interested parties.

III. Time of Response

Responses to this Request for Proposal should be directed to Marlene Nagel **NO LATER THAN 4 p.m. CST** on March 23, **2021**. Responses must be submitted electronically via email in PDF format to mnagel@marc.org and egarcia@marc.org.

Note: It is the responsibility of the vendor to verify the receipt of RFP Responses or any related electronic communication by MARC staff as there is always the possibility of emails getting blocked by MARC's firewall/spam filter.

SELECTION

Selection will be based on the vendor's ability to meet specified requirements/needs; expertise and experience of vendor; clarity of the proposal; the pricing and costs associated with the proposal submitted.

MARC staff may contact vendors with questions regarding the contents of proposals and to ask for clarifications during the evaluation process. Responses to questions should be in written format and submitted electronically via email to mnagel@marc.org.

Selection Criteria

A committee composed of MARC staff and project partners will review the proposals received and may conduct interviews with proposers. Each proposal will be reviewed and ranked based on these criteria:

1. Approach to designing and delivering the training (25 points)
2. Knowledge and experience of the trainer in both developing and delivering training (30 points)
3. Understanding of the challenges that unemployed and underemployed workers, particularly persons of color, face in identifying career options and selecting careers and training to advance their opportunities (15 points)
4. Ability to deliver the desired services in the specified timeframe (20 points)
5. Cost (10 points)

SELECTION SCHEDULE

The following schedule will be used for the selection of a vendor. All dates are tentative and subject to change

Request for Proposal Issued	March 2, 2021
Deadline for Proposal Submittal	March 23, 2021
Interviews as Needed	March 29, 2021
Notification of Award and Contract Negotiations	April 2, 2021
Commence Engagement	April 9, 2021

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ENGAGEMENT

This Request for Proposals does not commit MARC to award a contract or to pay costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this Request for Proposals. MARC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses received because of this request if it is considered in the best interest of MARC. MARC may require the proposer selected to participate in negotiations, to refine the Scope of Services to fit within the allocated budget.

OTHER KEY INFORMATION

Open Records Act and Proprietary Information

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) is a public organization and is subject to the Missouri Open Records Act (Chapter 610, RSMo). All records obtained or retained by MARC are considered public records and are open to the public or media upon request unless those records are specifically protected from disclosure by law or exempted under the Missouri Sunshine Law. All contents of a response to a Request for Bids, Qualifications, Proposals or information issued by MARC are considered public records and subject to public release following decisions by MARC regarding the bid request. If a proposer has information that it considers proprietary, a bidder shall identify documents or portions of documents it considers to contain descriptions of scientific and technological innovations in which it has a proprietary interest, or other information that is protected from public disclosure by law, which is contained in a Proposal. After either a contract is executed pursuant to the Request for Bids, RFQ or RFP, or all submittals are rejected, if a request is made to inspect information submitted and if documents are identified as “Proprietary Information” as provided above under Missouri Sunshine Law, MARC will notify the proposer of the request for access, and it shall be the burden of the proposer to establish that those documents are exempt from disclosure under the law.”

Proposers shall not offer any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any officer, employee, agent, or director of MARC for the purpose of influencing favorable disposition toward either their proposal or any other proposal submitted as a result of the Request for Proposal.