Overview and Background

About CenterState CEO

CenterState CEO is an independent and forward-thinking economic development strategist, business leadership organization and chamber of commerce; dedicated to the success of its members and the prosperity of the region.

About Work Train

Work Train is a dynamic workforce initiative that serves the needs of businesses and communities across Central New York. Strategically housed within CenterState CEO, we are a workforce intermediary, strategist and facilitator that convenes partnerships between businesses and public and nonprofit partners to drive effective workforce innovations. Work Train is a partner site of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions and is steered by a collaborative of local philanthropic organizations, as well as public sector, community and workforce partners who advise our strategies and investments.

Work Train promotes shared prosperity in Central New York by helping communities connect to economic opportunities, while helping regional businesses grow strong workforces. We catalyze partnerships that drive and sustain workforce innovations that benefit businesses and communities alike.

Recognized as a successful means for furthering workforce development within distressed communities, the Work Train approach has become a template for developing a larger partnership, with a broader reach for achieving greater community prosperity.

Key strategies employed by Work Train include:

- Identifying target industries with growing and persistent demand, as well as opportunities for advancing along career pathways;
- Analyzing employer demand to develop and maintain a demand-driven process with employer buy in;
- Aligning/leveraging existing workforce development efforts and resources; help our partners meet and exceed their own goals;
- Engaging community partners in developing and operationalizing workforce development strategies;
• Delivering interventions that are aligned with demand but are also accessible and relevant to the needs of the community;
• Focusing on outcomes that improve the lives of workers and contribute to the bottom lines of employers.

I. Project Description

In keeping with these strategies, CenterState CEO’s Work Train initiative has identified manufacturing as a key industry sector for a workforce development. To this end, Work Train is developing a core Manufacturing Career Readiness Program to train participants for entry level placement in the manufacturing sector, and through this Request For Proposals seeks to contract the program implementation to a workforce or educational training entity or institution.

As a part of the project contract, Work Train will fund a majority of costs related to program development and curriculum design – and will underwrite the delivery of training for the first 3-4 cohorts.

The proposed program will run approximately four to five weeks in length. Program graduates will exit the program demonstrating the attainment of minimum competencies required for success as determined by employers in the least amount of time necessary. Key components of the Manufacturing Career Readiness Program include but are not limited to:

• a sustainable and active candidate recruitment and referral process
• adoption of an employer driven and responsive curriculum, case management services
• integration of partner-provided support services such as legal assistance, career planning, and transportation solutions
• strategic matching of program graduates and employers
• a continuous improvement process as facilitated by an industry partnership structure including partners, training providers, and employers.

This training program should target under-resourced members of the community, including individuals who are un-and-underemployed, low income, immigrants and refugees, and ex-offenders (when possible). Training should be experiential, hands on when possible, and delivered within the context of the manufacturing industry.

Work Train seeks to launch the first cohort in the spring of 2017 and run a minimum of three programs in 2017, with a target class size of 15 individuals.

Key components of the Scope of Work for the selected training entity delivering the Manufacturing Career Training Program are:

Work with Work Train and its community partners to recruit a stream of potential candidates for participation in the Manufacturing Career Readiness Program.

Participate in a community wide recruitment strategy planning and implementation project

Assist in the review of an employer tailored curriculum that includes industry awareness, hard skills, safety awareness, soft skills, communication skills and teambuilding activities.

Provide, or support in the hiring of experienced and knowledgeable instructor/s and/or staff to deliver the manufacturing career-training program to diverse, job seeking populations. In addition to curriculum
delivery, program staff will deliver program information sessions, candidate assessments, and contribute to student advising and job matching/placement services.

Coordinate program delivery to coincide with employer demand for entry level workers and also with add-on industry specialization training programs designed to place participants in second or third tier employment opportunities. Respondent has the option of submitting proposals for the delivery and or providing a location for additional specialized trainings.

Collaborate with program partners who provide additional worker-centric supports and employment preparation and whose roles may include, but not be limited to career navigation, a car buyer program, legal guidance to manage previous criminal records, among other supports.

Commit to working with employer and partner members of a Manufacturing Industry Partnership, whose function is to serve as the vehicle for continuous improvement and ensure the outputs are in line with the needs of employers and participants. The Industry Partnership is convened by an intermediary, a third party facilitator who also functions to aid the Partnership in identifying shared workforce challenges and creative workforce solutions.

II. Training Entity Qualifications
A training entity should demonstrate the capacity to meet the previously stated program specifications and:

- Demonstrate the basic infrastructure to recruit, assess and enroll, train and graduate participants
- Demonstrate experience successfully running vocational training programs
- Provide accessible remedial education services to participants requiring additional assistance and individuals not selected to enter the program
- Provide geographically accessible, affordable and culturally accessible to unemployed or underemployed individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Demonstrate the ability to access revenue sources that would allow the training entity to continue providing the Manufacturing Career Readiness Program after the contract has ended on a schedule aligned with employer need and in a manner affordable to participants

III. The Role of Work Train
The Work Train approach utilizes a dual client model, a process by which training program objectives are driven by employer needs, and worker centric supports are integrated into program design so as to maximize potential program success for both clients. For Manufacturing Career Readiness Program, Work Train will

- Work with employers to identify curriculum objectives and academic baselines
- Coordinate the hiring of instructional design consultants and the development of program curriculum and assessments
- Coordinate employer and community partner engagement in program development and delivery
- Act as accountability agent for partners
- Provide technical assistance until the Manufacturing Career Readiness Program is fully embedded into the training entity and the program outcomes meet minimum standard metrics (80-90% placement of graduates, approximately 15 qualified graduates per program)
• As needed, assist in the recruitment and training of instructors to deliver program

Work Train, together with other industry and community partners will develop a comprehensive recruitment strategy and structure designed to provide a stream of potential candidates to this and other manufacturing opportunities beginning in 2017, and on a continuous basis thereafter. Technical assistance will be provided to align program components with national industry best practices and act as a resource to the training entity enabling the development of efficient, effective and institutionalized practices that achieve quantifiable success. Work Train, or other Work Train contracted intermediary entity will facilitate the ongoing development of the Manufacturing Career Readiness Partnership, which serves to connect employers, training, and support service providers and continue to identify challenges and workforce solutions.

IV. Proposals

Submit proposals electronically to Kira Crawford, via Kathleen Hallahan (khallahan@centerstateceo.com) with the subject line “Manufacturing Training Proposal from (your company name),” and should be received no later than 5:00 PM on February 23, 2015. See Timeline, Section VI for additional important dates.

Respondents should submit

1. A narrative including organizational overview and relevant experience, successes in the area of vocational training, alignment of approach, capacity to manage the needs addressed in Section II, Training Entity Qualifications in the delivery of the Manufacturing Career Readiness Program.
2. CV’s for staff who will be working on the Manufacturing Career Readiness Program, explanation of roles. Include hiring plans if institution will hire new instructor or staff to deliver training, and optionally, expressed interest in a pursuing a collaborative recruitment strategy to identify and train qualified instructor/s for the program.
3. The timeline for initial program delivery is Spring 2017. Provide an explanation of existing assets (personnel, processes, equipment) already in place and acquisitions that will enable entity to meet this deadline. Additionally, identify any restrictions regarding time frame for ongoing delivery of the program.
4. Proposed budget for organizational startup costs (not including manufacturing specific equipment) and cost per program assuming a class of 15 participants. Additionally, provide approximate total cost of participation in proposed program, from enrollment through graduation, to participants.

V. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by an Evaluation Team consisting of Work Train staff members and external partners based on the criteria below. Work Train may, at its discretion, request presentations by or meetings with any or all bidders, to clarify or negotiate modifications to the bidder’s proposals. However, Work Train reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted.

In addition, it reserves the right to:
• Contact any bidder to clarify responses.
• Contact current or past customers of the bidder.
• Select the bidder it feels best meets the needs of the project, regardless of whether the proposal has the lowest cost.
• Access revenue sources that would allow the training entity to continue providing the Manufacturing Career Readiness Program after the contract has ended on a schedule aligned with employer need.
• Accept or reject all or any part of any response, waive minor technicalities, and select a bidder that best serves the goals of the project, and these actions will not cause any material unfairness to other bidders.

The selection criteria used to rank the responding organizations proposals, in order of importance, is as follows:

1. Capacity: Demonstrated ability of the respondent to perform all of the required services listed in Section II, Training Entity Qualifications
2. Availability: Ability to respond to proposed time schedule and employer demand for training on an ongoing basis
3. Fee Proposals: Proposed costs for this project and the financial sustainability of the training program
4. Accessibility: Ability to mitigate barriers to participation and make programming accessible to interested and qualified potential candidates
5. Experience: The extent and quality of prior relevant experience and demonstrated successes in the delivery of vocational training programs with underemployed and diverse populations

VI. Timeline

RFP Release: Monday January 31, 2017
Request For Proposals will be released via email and posted on CenterStateCEO’s website, in the News and Events section.

2/14/17 Update: Last Day for questions: Wednesday February 15, 2017 by 5:00

Last Day For Questions: Monday February 13th, 2017 by 5:00
Submit questions to Kira Crawford (kcrawford@centerstateceo.com) using the subject line “Manufacturing RFP Inquiry” or via phone at 315-751-2289. Responses to questions will be added to Request For Proposals and made available on February 16th by 5:00 on CenterStateCEO’s website, the News and Events section.

2/14/17 Update: No requests to attend the vendor conference were received, therefore the optional vendor conference has been canceled. Please submit questions via email or by phone prior to the above listed time and date. Optional Vendor Conference: Wednesday February 15th, 2017 at 3:00

At the discretion of Work Train, please hold these dates for an optional vendor conference. Please contact Kira Crawford (kcrawford@centerstateceo.com) by Thursday February 9th at 5:00 if you are interested in attending.

Proposal Due: Thursday February 23, 2017 by 5:00
Electronically submit complete proposal to Kira Crawford via Kathleen Hallahan (khallahan@centerstateceo.com) with the subject line “Manufacturing Training RFP from (your company name),” in the subject line.
Estimated Notice of Intent to Award: Monday February 27th, 2017

After a complete and thorough evaluation process, the selected vendor will receive a “Notice of Intent to Award” letter and all non-selected vendors will receive notice that the award has been made to another vendor.