

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
for
COMMUNITY-BASED RECRUITMENT & CAREER NAVIGATION
within the Work Train Initiative

Intentionally expanding access to jobs and career opportunities - and the support to facilitate success - to more low-income individuals in the city of Syracuse.

Work Train is a community workforce initiative dedicated to providing career opportunities for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed, while helping companies build strong workforces. Work Train is seeking proposals for the provision of community-based recruitment and career navigation services, within the Work Train approach, as described in this Request for Proposals (RFP). Please submit your proposal to Juhanna Rogers at jrogers@centerstateceo.com no later than **April 1, 2019 5:00 p.m.**

There will be an opportunity to ask questions about this RFP and to engage with other interested applicants on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 9:30am-10:30am at the Philanthropy Center, 431 East Fayette Street Syracuse, NY 13203. If you are unable to join us in person, you are welcome to participate via phone at 1-877-247-5094, Participant Pin:1398574. We will post a transcript of the session online under this RFP at www.centerstateceo.com/worktrainrfp.

Finalists will be invited for an interview before a final decision is made on the successful applicant(s).

Work Train's Approach to Connecting People with Jobs

Work Train engages with various partners in order to fulfill its mission. We partner with

- *employers* looking to hire individuals in good jobs with a pathway for career advancement,
- *training providers* to facilitate program participants' preparation to enter the workforce successfully, and
- *community organizations* to recruit candidates for these training and employment opportunities as well as provide career navigation support from recruitment through employment.

In the Syracuse area, there are large portions of the population who are struggling to find good work, while an abundance of employers are perpetually looking for prepared workers. We believe that there is a great deal of hidden talent locally - individuals normally overlooked by traditional employer hiring practices – and Work Train's approach, with the right partners, can bridge this gap for more people and more employers, thereby fostering greater prosperity in, and for, the region.

Scope of Work

Summary: Work Train seeks to partner with an organization (or a collaborative between multiple organizations), who can identify talent in the community; assess their alignment with target

industries and career pathways; engage in basic support and preparation necessary to confidently refer these individuals into a Work Train-sponsored job seeker program at SUNY Syracuse EOC; and continue to support these individuals with ongoing career navigation services as needed/requested.

Recruitment/Referral: Work Train job seeker programs at SUNY EOC are focused on preparing individuals for careers in health care, manufacturing, and construction (and tech later in 2019). Within each program (and corresponding career pathway), Work Train has developed “candidate profiles” that outline the basic qualifications for success on a given track. We are looking for a partner (or collaborative of partners) to identify local residents who fit these profiles; recruit and refer them into programs; provide support to individuals (and/or make connections/linkages to support organizations) so that they can mitigate barriers (such as transportation, childcare, housing, legal issues) and successfully enter programs, ready to succeed. This aspect of the work will require proactive outreach, networking, and engagement within the community. Finally, one point of emphasis - we seek to also recruit individuals who are currently employed but are looking for different opportunities - individuals who are potentially working one or more jobs but seek one full-time job with a career advancement pathway.

As a part of the recruitment function, we will likely ask successful applicant(s) to share feedback, data and stories that inform Work Train research and program design. We might ask them to facilitate interviews, surveys, and feedback sessions among community members in order to revise and inform current and future strategies and programming.

Career Navigation: Linked to this multi-pronged strategic recruitment effort, we are seeking partners to continue to engage with the individuals they are recruiting as they decide which training opportunities to pursue; help individuals resolve chronic and temporary challenges with the awareness of the individuals’ contexts and the best tailored support plan addressing barriers to employment; and support their (re-)entry into the workforce and their advancement along their own career pathway. Once someone is placed in a job seeker program, this work will happen in coordination primarily with SUNY EOC staff. Upon placement into a job within a career pathway, this work will happen in concert primarily with Work Train staff. We believe this dual, linked function of recruitment and ongoing support is critical to the long-term success of this approach, and we are seeking one or more entities to execute this scope of work.

Partnership Expectations: Successful applicant(s) will understand the challenges faced by members of different communities; have connections in these communities to be able to recruit quickly and strategically; have experience working with social service organizations and government entities; and come with some solutions and also be fully motivated and interested in engaging in an iterative process to reflect on the work being done and how it can be improved. We expect the successful candidate(s) to be open to testing their current operating norms and to crafting - and piloting - new solutions and strategies informed by their work, by community advisors, and/or by engagement with Work Train.

We anticipate a total of approximately 500 participants successfully completing Work Train programs over the 12-month contract period. We expect the selected entity would be responsible for 40-60% of these participants’ entry into the program and related support before, during and after. Our primary expectation though is that they recruit, prepare and refer individuals to programs in alignment with the candidate profiles provided and that they have a solid system and strategy for providing navigation services.

Even though the structure of this engagement with Work Train will be contractual with clear deliverables, we will work as partners to maximize impact. We will look to the successful applicant(s) to engage with Work Train staff - and other partners¹ as appropriate - on a regular and ongoing basis as we learn together what strategies are working, what's not and what can be tweaked to get the results we collectively seek. We strive to make impactful, sustainable change and seek to do so through meaningful community, training provider and employer partnerships. This RFP is part of our effort in improving our work in the city of Syracuse which is part of our larger effort to scale the approach in the region.

Length & Nature of Contract

The contract will be awarded to one or more successful applicants for a period of 12 months. This initial award is considered a pilot. Our hope and expectation is that there would be subsequent awards, assuming funding can be secured.

Applicants may choose to serve as the Prime and sub-contract with other entities in order to fulfill the scope of work. Regardless, successful applicants will illustrate how they would collaborate with various stakeholders and partners in order to maximize the impact of the work.

Proposals should include

- Organizational experience, expertise and connections relevant to this scope of work.
- Staffing plan and capacity to perform the scope of work, including programmatic and administrative capacity (financial and data management).
- Budget for 12 months of project execution.
- Approach to
 - the project overall, including the partnership with Work Train.
 - recruitment of potential candidates for Work Train programming - unemployed, underemployed, residents of various neighborhoods, members of different communities/affiliations.
 - the career navigation component from recruitment phase through employment.
- Methodology to achieving goals.
- Opportunities and challenges anticipated and proposed responses to each.
- Systems in place or that would be in place to manage data and report to findings to Work Train.

Resources Available:

- [Work Train Phase I report](#)
- Sample candidate profiles: [Skilled health care](#) & [Entry-level manufacturing](#)
- [ProTrain video](#)
- [Work Train evaluation](#)
- Syracuse SUNY EOC recruitment flyers ([Health Train](#)), [Work Train application](#), [EOC application](#)

Selection Criteria

The selection criteria that will be used to rank applicants, in order of importance, are as follows:

- **Capability**: Demonstrated ability to perform the scope of work.

¹ including but not limited to Syracuse SUNY Educational Opportunity Center who delivers a number of Work Train programs and other successful applicant(s) of this RFP.

- Qualifications: Individual qualifications and list of proposed personnel for this project.
- Experience: The extent and quality of prior, relevant experience, including community-based work, recruitment/career support service provision, collaborative projects, iterative learning processes.
- Availability: Ability to begin work Spring 2019 for 12 months.
- Fee: Fee proposals will be considered but will not be the sole factor in selection.

CenterState CEO and Its Economic Inclusion Division

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. CenterState CEO's work occurs across four major divisions: Business and Economic Development; Innovation and Entrepreneurship; Research Policy and Planning; and Economic Inclusion.

Work Train is one of the key programs of CenterState CEO's Economic Inclusion (EI) division. The EI division aims to create thriving communities by translating economic growth into economic opportunity, increased wealth, and improved quality of life within low-income communities. The work of EI is highly collaborative and involves a large number of partners.

The Economic Inclusion (Inclusion) division at CenterState CEO, formed in 2015, is dedicated to creating thriving communities through increased prosperity for all Central New York residents. To do this work, the Inclusion team convenes and supports partnerships that bring together business and community leadership to address issues of poverty and economic disparity in the region. The work ultimately seeks to translate economic growth into economic opportunity, increased wealth, and improved quality of life within low-income communities. The Inclusion team currently manages initiatives in the realms of Workforce Development, Small Business Development/Entrepreneurship; and Neighborhood Revitalization. Beyond its programmatic work, Inclusion seeks to pursue systems changes and advocate for public policies that advance the goals of economic inclusion.

Work Train Initiative

Work Train is a community workforce initiative, fiscally sponsored by the United Way of Central New York and staffed by CenterState CEO's Economic Inclusion Division. Work Train is guided by a Collaborative of leaders from philanthropy, business, government and the community. Work Train is dedicated to providing career opportunities for individuals who are unemployed and underemployed, while helping companies build stronger workforces. Work Train serves as a workforce intermediary and strategist – convening businesses, public organizations, and nonprofit entities to forge partnerships to deliver effective and non-duplicative workforce solutions. Work Train has the flexibility to identify workforce challenges, use a design process to develop innovative strategies, and assemble the right teams that are necessary to execute them. Currently, Work Train is focused in the industries of healthcare, manufacturing, tech, and construction.