Innovation and Expansion Project

Invitation for Bid (IFB)

6100037453

Statement of Work

**Project Name:** Innovation and Expansion Project - Students with Disabilities Transition Employment Project (STEP)

**Department:** Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

**Date:** March 2016

1. **OBJECTIVES:**

   The key objective for this project is the development of an Innovation and Expansion Project to provide Students with Disabilities a Transition Employment Project (STEP) offering work-based learning experiences to high school students. These new programs will comply with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan and target the development of new strategies and programs that currently may not be available in a District Office’s service area.

   Depending on the availability of funds, OVR will use Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Funds to the extent permissible for the development of Innovation and Expansion Projects. OVR is seeking STEP projects that result in work-based learning experiences in competitive employment sites for potentially eligible or existing OVR high school student customers as defined by Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act. Competitive integrated employment means work that—

   (i) Is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment) and for which an individual is compensated at a rate that—

   (A) Is not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate required in the applicable State or local minimum wage law;

   (B) Is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills;

   (C) In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills;

   (D) Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees; and

   (ii) Is at a location—

   (A) Typically found in the community; and
(B) Where the employee with a disability interacts for the purpose of performing the duties of the position with other employees within the particular work unit and the entire work site, and, as appropriate to the work performed, other persons (e.g., customers and vendors), who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and

(iii) Presents, as appropriate, opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

Transition-Related definition:
Student with Disabilities: The ACT, Section 7(37)

(37) STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “student with a disability” means an individual with a disability who—

(i)(I)(aa) is not younger than the earliest age for the provision of transition services under section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)); or

(bb) if the State involved elects to use a lower minimum age for receipt of pre-employment transition services under this Act, is not younger than that minimum age; and

(II)(aa) is not older than 21 years of age; or

(bb) if the State law for the State provides for a higher maximum age for receipt of services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), is not older than that maximum age; and

(ii)(I) is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.); or

(II) is an individual with a disability, for purposes of section 504.

Eligible bidders are existing public or private entities that possess the infrastructure, a proven track record, and at least three (3) years of demonstrated experience and expertise, to provide rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. Bidders must also have an established collaborative relationship with local OVR/BVRS/BBVS District Offices. OVR is interested in receiving bids to develop this project for the following BVRS District Offices: Erie District Office, Dubois District Office, Johnstown District Office, Altoona District Office, York District Office, Williamsport District Office; Norristown District Office, Philadelphia District Office, and Reading District Office. Each Bidder must serve BBVS potentially eligible or existing BBVS eligible high school student customers in the counties associated with the BVRS District Office. Each Bid must address all counties associated with the BVRS District Office. If a sufficient number of Bids are not received or do not meet the minimum scoring requirements, OVR reserves the right to reissue this IFB.
1. **GENERAL OBJECTIVE (Contractor):** The key objective for this Student Transition Employment Project (STEP) is the successful development and provision of Work-Based Learning Experiences. Contractors will be bidding for a District Office or multiple District Offices and will serve 135 high school students per District Office. The overall goal is to provide potentially eligible or existing OVR high school student customers with disabilities with a Work-Based Learning Experience as defined by section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act. OVR’s preference is for services to be provided to potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. Work-based learning experiences include but are not limited to: in-school, after school or summer opportunities, or experiences outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that are provided in a competitive integrated employment site in the community. Experiences must be paid in accordance with local, county and state laws. The paid work experience shall not displace regular employees at the employers’ work sites.

2. **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES (Contractor):**
   1) Contractors will serve 135 high school students per District Office, 270 for two District Offices, etc. through individual or group experiences across multiple school districts and counties. Contractor must provide a list of all the school districts that they will be working with on this project.
   2) Project developed for a District Office or multiple District Offices will result in the successful completion of a paid work-based learning experience for at least 115 students per District Office. A successful Work-Based Learning Experience is defined as the following: a student participating in a work-based learning experience for at least a nine week period, working 10 hours a week for a maximum of 90 hours.
   3) The project will be developed collaboratively with local community agencies, employers, or providers serving students with disabilities as defined by the Rehabilitation Act.
   4) The project will be developed in close collaboration with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation through OVR Regional Transition Specialists, Transition VR Counselors, the local OVR Business Team and District Office Supervisory/Management staff.

2. **NATURE and SCOPE of the PROJECT [DELIVERABLES]:**
   1. Contractor will serve a minimum of 135 high school students with disabilities in the Student Transition Employment Project for each District Office. This experience will result in the successful completion of a work-based learning experience in a competitive integrated employment site for at least 115 high school students per District Office. A successful work-based learning experience is defined as the following: a student participating in a work-based learning experience for at least a nine week period, working 10 hours a week for a maximum of 90 hours.
   2. Contractor will recruit potentially eligible or existing OVR high school student customers as defined by Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act in conjunction with
OVR district office and local school personnel for the defined project area. Each potentially eligible student must be verified by OVR. Although potentially eligible students or existing OVR student customers between the ages of 14-21 may be served in this project, the Contractor should focus on providing services to students within the last two years of high school. OVR’s preference is for services to be provided to potentially eligible high school students with disabilities. The Contractor will keep the Work-Based Learning Experience Referral Form to document each participant’s status as a potentially eligible or eligible OVR customer.

3. Contractor will develop a plan for appropriate work-based learning experiences to serve students with disabilities that are still enrolled in high school. This individualized plan will be developed through the following activities: intake interviews, review of existing information and discussion with the school system, other collaborating agencies and the OVR counselor. These reports will be shared with the school district and with OVR on an ongoing basis. Contractor must provide a list of all the school districts that they will be working with on this project.

4. Contractor will develop the following types of “work-based learning experiences” for potentially eligible or existing OVR high school student customers:

   1) Work-based learning experiences include but are not limited to: in-school, after school or summer opportunities, or experiences outside the traditional school setting (including internships), are provided in a competitive integrated employment site in the community. Work-based learning experiences can be contractor funded work experiences/funded internships or employer paid work experiences/On-the-Job Training (OJT) or it can be a combination of both methods defined below in a. and b.:

   a. Contractor Funded Work Experiences/Funded Internships – to be determined on a case by case basis and be in accordance with state and local laws and regulations. These experiences will provide potentially eligible or eligible high school students with disabilities with work experiences or internships that include in-school, after school or summer opportunities, or experiences outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that are provided in competitive integrated employment sites in the community. The Contractor will provide participating students with stipends for the length of their participation. The stipend will be equal to wages received by employees in comparable positions and will equal at least the PA minimum hourly wage. OVR’s preference is for contractor funded work experiences to be developed as this method may create more opportunities for students. Student stipends must be included in the budget. The stipend is paid by the Contractor to a student who is undergoing an unpaid Work-Based Learning Experience at a competitive integrated employment site other than the Contractor. The stipend is not considered wages and the Contractor does not need to include FICA, Workers Comp, and
Unemployment Compensation for Contractor Funded Work Experiences/Funded Internships stipends. The Contractor will issue students MISC 1099s to report the income.

b. Employer Paid Work Experiences/On-the-Job Training – to be determined on a case by case basis and must be consistent with OVR policy. Wages must be paid at minimum wage or higher and be comparable to current employees in the same position.

i. On-the-Job Training is defined as the following: The Jobs for All On-the-Job Training or OJT Initiative provides opportunities for potentially eligible or eligible OVR students with disabilities as defined by the Rehabilitation Act to enter into employment. The Contractor will utilize and administer the OJT process following existing OVR OJT policies and forms to better enable students to obtain paid work experiences. OVR recognizes there are costs associated with training an employee to learn a new job. The Jobs for All OJT will provide employer reimbursement of a percentage (not to exceed 100%) of the student’s wage to absorb some of these training costs. The Jobs for All OJT allows a reimbursement of student’s wages for Internships and other non-permanent employment, either full-time or part-time. This can include summer student employment, seasonal and temporary positions. Permanent employment positions are also eligible for Jobs for All OJT reimbursements for student customers. Student wages through an OJT must reimburse the employer for wages. The employer will withhold from the student’s wages normal Federal and State mandated taxes or benefits (including FICA and the Unemployment Tax). Any other indirect costs beyond wages, mandated taxes or benefits are the employer’s responsibility.

2) Work-based learning experiences must meet the requirements set forth in the Pennsylvania Child Labor Law, 43 P.S. §§ 40.1-40.14. OVR expects students to participate in a work-based learning experience for at least a nine week period, working 10 hours a week for a maximum of 90 hours. Contractor will reimburse an employer a maximum of 90 hours if using the OJT process for a work-based learning experience. If a contractor stipend is used, a maximum of 90 hours per student may be paid directly through the contractor. An extension to this limit may be possible with the approval of the OVR Regional Transition Specialist. These work experiences may include in-school, after school or summer opportunities, or experiences outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that are provided in a competitive integrated employment site in the community. Students may participate in more than one work experience. However, those students can only be counted once during a contract period regardless of the number of work experiences a student completes.
5. Contractor will coordinate the initial intake/referral and schedule meetings with each student to determine their interests in work experiences, skills, and abilities in order to facilitate work-based learning experience of their choice.

6. Contractor will develop work-based learning sites in collaboration with school district, student, and local OVR district office staff.

7. Contractor will work with businesses to develop sites for work-based learning experiences.

8. Contractor will develop agreements with employers to facilitate student participation, including the number of hours, job tasks, and timeline for completion.

9. Contractor will provide on-site coordination to the student and the employer to assist with learning job tasks, workplace safety and establishing natural supports for the student. Some students may need more intensive coordination to learn job skills, while other may need minimal coordination. Contractors should be checking in with employers on a weekly basis, making at least one site visit to the employer each week. Contractor will submit a written summary monthly of these visits to employers including the number of hours used each month by the student.

10. Contractor will communicate and collaborate with the OVR Local Business Team as Paid Work Experiences/On-the-Job Training are developed with area employers. The Paid Work Experience/On-the-Job Training shall not displace regular employees at the employers’ work sites.

11. Contractor will complete and submit the Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE) Student Evaluation Report to OVR for each student monthly. The WBLE Student Evaluation Form should contain information from the student’s plan and from the employer on the student’s performance, including information regarding attendance, tardiness, soft skills, and skills related directly to the job tasks. This information can be used by the school district to develop IEP goals and by the OVR counselor to determine future services and IPE development.

12. Contractor will present a clear project evaluation plan with a quantifiable approach to measure progress toward project objectives and deliverables. This plan will include timetables, scheduled activities, dates for review and staff responsible for evaluating each activity.

13. Contractor will complete data collection as per established criteria and submit Quarterly and Final Reports to OVR. The Student Evaluation Form will be completed monthly and submitted to OVR.

14. Contractor will collect and report on any additional data required by OVR.

15. Contractor will submit a detailed plan to sustain this Student Transition Employment Project after the contract period.

3. IMPLEMENTATION:

1. The Contractor will provide a realistic Work Plan, a Timeline, and a Budget and Budget Narrative to implement the Student Transition Employment Project as part of the Invitation for Bid.
2. Contractor will provide Quarterly Reports and Financial Status Reports as required.

3. The Contractor will meet monthly with the OVR Regional Transition Specialist, District Office Management and/or other appropriate staff to review progress on the project.

4. Contractor will submit a Request for Funds (RFF) no less than quarterly to draw down funds to operate the program.

5. No subcontract shall be made by the Contractor with any other party to furnish any of the work or services described in the Work Plan without written approval from OVR. Any subcontract hereunder entered into, subsequent to the execution of this project, must be approved by OVR.

4. REPORTS AND PROJECT CONTROLS:
   1. Contractor will provide to the Regional Transition Specialist and appropriate local District Office Management the completed Quarterly Report at the end of each quarter along with the Financial Status Report, Staff Certification Forms and a list of customers served, including the specific services provided. The Student Evaluation Form will be completed monthly and submitted to OVR.
   2. Contractor will meet at least yearly with the Regional Transition Specialist and other appropriate local District Office or Central Office Management for an on-site monitoring of the programmatic and fiscal aspects of the project.
   3. Contractor will submit a Final Report at the end of the project. The format for this report will be provided.

5. METHOD OF AWARD: MULTIPLE AWARD, BEST VALUE DETERMINATION – INVITATION FOR BID (IFB):
   To be eligible for selection, a bid must be submitted by mail to the Department of Labor and Industry, BAS-Procurement, Room 205, 651 Boas Street, Harrisburg, PA 17121, on time and contain all the required documentation, signatures and Attachments. A Multiple Award will be made on the Best Value Determination of all responsible and responsive Bidders who comply with the “Eligibility Requirements” set forth in this IFB. The Invitation for Bid Process includes these three (3) steps: 1). When services are needed for a specific Region or geographical area, OVR will evaluate those Bidders on the List of Responsive and Responsible Bidders, 2). OVR will select a Bidder based upon a Best Value Determination, and 3) OVR may issue a Purchase Order/Funds Commitment to the selected Bidder based upon the Best Value Determination. OVR reserves the right to award an Innovation and Expansion Purchase Order/Funds Commitment based on available funding after the Best Value Determination has been completed. Submissions must include 1 original and 4 copies plus two CD files/flash drives.

6. ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE COSTS:
   Costs must be directly related to the development, provision and operation of the Student Transition Employment Project. Project costs that are not directly related to the provision of work-based learning experiences for students are not allowable. If the
bid contains unallowable costs, OVR may accept the bid after acknowledgment by
the Contractor that the unallowable costs will be removed from the Bid and are not
subject to funding under this project. Bidders are strongly encouraged to build upon
existing resources, including the use of existing facilities and equipment to support
the project.

Allowable Costs:
- Personnel costs and fringe benefits
- PETS funds can be used for Transition Specialists, Transition Coaches, or Work-
  Based Learning Coordinators to provide on-site coordination to the student and
  the employer to assist with learning job tasks, workplace safety and establishing
  natural supports for the student. Some students may need more intensive
  coordination to learn job skills, while other may need minimal coordination.
- Administrative Costs as direct charges are limited to no more than 5% of the
  Staff Category
- Equipment required by staff to operate the new/expanded project with Pre-
  Employment Transition Services (PETS) funds
- Staff Travel to and from providing PETS services
- Program supplies
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) wage reimbursements/Student Stipends
- Other costs allowed by the Rehabilitation Services Administration for the
  operation of a PETS project

Disallowable Costs:
- PETS funds cannot be used for job coaches or job coaching activities since Work-
  Based Learning Experiences are intended to be “pre-employment services” while
  job coaching is intended to be used as an “employment service” to assist an
  individual in obtaining a permanent position.
- Building construction, includes purchase of a building
- Renovations or alterations
- Administrative costs as a line item percentage
- Indirect costs – costs that have been incurred for common or joint objectives and
  cannot be readily identified with a particular final cost objective
- Vehicles rented, leased or purchased
- Entertainment expenses, including refreshments for any type of celebration or
  meeting
- Finance charges, fines or interest charges
- Projects supported during the fiscal year with other state or federal funds.
- Any costs associated with the development of this bid
- Other costs disallowed by the Rehabilitation Services Administration

7. OPTION TO ADD/REMOVE SERVICES:
The addition and/or deletion of any service during the life of the Funds Commitment
will be at the sole discretion of the Department of Labor and Industry, if it is deemed
to be in the best interest of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Existing services
may be removed from the Funds Commitment for reasons including if they are no longer required as part of the project or it has been determined by the Department of Labor and Industry that their removal is in the best interest of the Commonwealth.

8. **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

   In order to be eligible to bid on the Innovation and Expansion Project, Bidders must meet and **affirm the following:**
   
   1. Participants will be placed in work-based learning experiences in competitive integrated employment sites. Competitive integrated employment is defined specifically on pages 1-2 of this IFB.
   
   2. Eligible bidders are existing public or private entities that possess the infrastructure, a proven track record, and at least three (3) years of demonstrated experience and expertise, to provide rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities.
   
   3. Job descriptions for all positions must be included with the Invitation for Bid.
   
   4. Any consultants/staff resumes are included with the Invitation for Bid.
   
   5. Projects will only serve potentially eligible or eligible OVR students and must keep and make available the Work-Based Learning Experience Referral Form to document their status.
   
   6. Contractor may revise the project only upon approval of OVR.
   
   7. Bidder must provide work-based learning experiences to potentially eligible or eligible OVR student customers with disabilities of BVRS/BBVS for a District Office or multiple District Offices listed in the IFB on page 2 and all the counties associated with the District Office(s).
   
   8. The awarded Contractor’s employees having contact with children must obtain the clearances required by section 6344 of the Child Protective Services Law (23 P.S. § 6344).
   
   9. By the submission of your Bid, the Contractor agrees to the requirements set forth in the IFB certifies that Contractor meet these requirements, and the Contractor will complete all the Deliverables listed in the Statement of Work. The OVR office shall ask for information as needed at any time to insure compliance.

9. **BID SUBMISSION:**

   Paper Bids, including 1 original and 4 complete copies with two CD files/flash drives, will be mailed to: **Department of Labor and Industry, BAS-Procurement, Room 205, 651 Boas Street, Harrisburg, PA 17121.** Complete and submit the following documents, as required, in response to this IFB:
   
   1. BOP-1206 – IFB 6100035934 Information for Bid and the Statement of Work
   
   2. BOP-1204 – Contract Terms and Conditions
   
   3. Attachment A - Identification of Geographic Area to be Served
   
   4. Attachment B - Domestic Workforce Utilization Certification
   
   5. Attachment C - Budget Proposal Spreadsheet Template
   
   6. Attachment D - General Conditions and Instructions to Bidders for an Invitation for Bid
   
   7. Attachment E - Lobbying Certification
   
   8. Attachment F - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities Form.
9. Attachment G - Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Sub-Recipient Data Sheet
10. Attachment H - Innovation and Expansion Project Implementing Requirements
11. Attachment I - Timeline
12. Attachment J – I&E Bid Form - Best Value Determination Criteria. This Form contains instructions for developing the Work Plan, page limits, Review Criteria, and printing requirements, etc.
13. I&E Q&A’s

10. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:
Subject to the availability of funds, the Funds Commitment will be effective from July 1, 2016 or the date upon final approval by all necessary Commonwealth signatories, which ever date is later, until June 30, 2017. If funds are available, successful projects may have the option of being renewed for 4 one year periods. No services are to begin until the awarded Contractor receives a “Notice to Proceed.”

11. BILLING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:
The Contractor shall submit to OVR a Request for Funds (RFF) for advance payment for anticipated costs to perform services during each quarter, using the format and form supplied by OVR. The Contractor will be required to maintain records that are sufficient to fully disclose the extent and nature of all services provided for 5 years. Additional reporting requirements may be required to satisfy OVR.

12. SENSITIVE INFORMATION:
Adhere to the confidentiality requirements of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and its governing regulations.

Respect confidentiality of all OVR employees and customers.

13. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS
- Adhere to the Standard Contract Terms and Conditions.
- Adhere to the OVR Implementing Requirements
- The awarded Contractor’s employees having contact with children must obtain the clearances required by section 6344 of the Child Protective Services Law (23 P.S. § 6344).
- Contractors are required to notify participants and/or their parent/guardian about the availability and purposes of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) under section 112 of the Rehabilitation Act, including contact information for seeking assistance from CAP.