

**Request for Proposals (RFP) for**

**Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare**

**Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area**

**RFP # 135-23-01**

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| **RFP SUMMARY:** The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board is soliciting proposals for an Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare for Carbon and Monroe Counties, aimed at both in-school and out-of-school youth, using $68,274 of WIOA and TANF YDP funding. The program, to run from 9/11/23 to 12/31/24, should offer training opportunities in healthcare, providing observational learning experiences, professional development sessions, job readiness skills, and continued case management. Demonstrated experience in the proposal area and a proven success rate are prerequisites for the applicants. |
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| **RFP ISSUE DATE** | July 14th, 2023 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE** | August 18th, 2023 |
| **DEADLINE FOR QUESTIONS** | The deadline for questions is August 4th, 2023, at 4:00 P.M. EST. Questions and/or inquiries must be submitted in writing to Samuel Hellen or Deborah Harrison, the RFP Official Contacts, as indicated below. |
| **PROPOSAL****SUBMISSION PROCESS** | Proposals can be submitted:By Mail: 811 Blakeslee Blvd. Dr. E, Suite 85, Lehighton, PA 18235By Email: shellen@pcwia.orgOnline via OneDrive: [**Submission Link**](https://pcwia-my.sharepoint.com/%3Af%3A/g/personal/shellen_pcwia_org/El70BnU7W1VNozTxmY5wJQEB9dXbJ02xdSEXiy9ymTSTIQ?e=cdDRGf) |
| **RFP WEBSITE** | <https://pcwia.org/rfps/> |
| **RFP OFFICIAL CONTACT**  | Samuel Hellen, Executive Director, Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area, (484) 464-2517, shellen@pcwia.orgDeborah Harrison, Administrator, PA CareerLink® Monroe County, (570) 620-0782, dahmccl@ptd.net |

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# The Opportunity

## Summary

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board is seeking proposals for the implementation of an Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare. The program aims to provide comprehensive training and career development opportunities for WIOA In-School Youth, WIOA Out-of-School Youth, TANF YDP, and other youth populations in Carbon and Monroe Counties. This initiative is in response to the growing demand for skilled healthcare professionals in the region and the need for targeted, accessible training for our youth.

We're looking for vendors capable of designing and implementing an immersive program that offers broad exposure to healthcare careers, both clinical and non-clinical, while equipping participants with job readiness skills. This includes professional development sessions, observational learning experiences in healthcare settings, guest lectures, and a career pathways component. Vendors must also provide ongoing case management throughout the program duration to support participant retention and job placement post-program.

The program is scheduled to run from 9/11/23 to 12/31/24, and the contract will be awarded based on innovative and cost-effective proposals that demonstrate a clear understanding of our goals and a proven track record in similar projects.

If you're an experienced service provider passionate about youth development and healthcare training, we invite you to submit your proposal. This is an opportunity to make a lasting impact on our youth, influence the future of our local healthcare industry, and contribute to the broader community.

##  Background

**Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area Overview**

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board (WDB) is comprised of private-sector business, social service, education, labor, economic development, and community-based organization representatives. The purpose of the Board is to provide strategic oversight, direction, and focus to the employment and training services provided to residents and employers of the 4 counties that comprise the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area (WDA) – Carbon, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne Counties.

**Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare Overview**

In the past, the Poconos, through the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board, has actively sought to bridge the gap between youth employment and the growing demand for healthcare professionals in the Pocono Counties. This has largely been achieved through periodic initiatives such as the Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare, which leverages WIOA and TANF YDP funding to offer vocational training and exposure to in-school and out-of-school youths.

Pocono Counties WDA has previously provided this opportunity to one school district and is seeking to expand the success of this innovative youth program to multiple school districts, cities, and counties, increasing the participant number and geographic reach of the program.

Over the last five years, with a growing emphasis on job readiness and soft skills training in addition to practical healthcare skills, there has been a noticeable shift in program design. Major initiatives, both internal and external, have focused on providing these youths with a comprehensive understanding of the healthcare industry, including exposure to both clinical and non-clinical roles, and improving employability via continual case management.

This program seeks to continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community and the healthcare industry at large, effectively creating a pathway for youths to secure fulfilling and in-demand careers in healthcare.

**Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare** **Needs Statement**

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area has identified a critical need to better prepare our youth, particularly those identified as WIOA In-School Youth, WIOA Out-of-School Youth, TANF YDP, and other vulnerable groups, for careers in the healthcare sector. The healthcare industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors nationwide, and the demand for skilled healthcare professionals in Carbon and Monroe Counties is no exception. However, without effective training and exposure to the diverse roles within this industry, our youth risk being left behind in this growing job market.

Statistical data has shown a significant disparity between the number of available healthcare jobs and the qualified candidates within our region. The gap not only highlights the need for enhanced vocational training and exposure to healthcare careers but also the urgent requirement for foundational job readiness skills, including soft skills like communication and emotional intelligence.

Historically, efforts have been fragmented and lacked a comprehensive approach, often failing to provide holistic exposure to the myriad career paths within healthcare, from clinical to non-clinical roles. Furthermore, the lack of continued case management throughout the program's duration has resulted in a lower retention rate, and subsequently, a lower transition to employment rate post-program.

This program aims to address these needs by offering an innovative, well-rounded training approach that provides observational learning experiences, professional development sessions, career exploration, and job readiness skills training. With an intentional focus on job-oriented soft skills and continued case management, we seek to ensure that our youth are not only trained but also supported as they transition into the workforce.

By investing in our youth and addressing these challenges, we can bridge the gap between the growing demand for healthcare professionals and the availability of trained, ready-to-work candidates within our communities. It's not just about meeting the needs of our local labor market; it's about providing our youth with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to seize these career opportunities and contribute to their community.

##  Outcome Goals

The following outcome goals are designed to define success for this RFP, focusing on the measurable effects of the contracted activities while providing a clear framework for vendor selection, performance tracking, and contract structure.

* **Increase in Program Participation:** An immediate measure of success will be an increased enrollment of eligible individuals in the program, indicating that we're reaching our targeted demographics and offering an appealing program structure and content.
* **Enhancement in Job Readiness Skills:** Our goal is to see a significant improvement in the job readiness skills of the participants, including both technical healthcare abilities and soft skills such as communication, networking, and emotional intelligence.
* **Greater Awareness of Healthcare Career Options:** The program should effectively expose participants to a wide range of healthcare careers, both clinical and non-clinical, ensuring they are well-informed about the breadth of opportunities within the healthcare industry.
* **Increase in Program Completion Rates:** A successful outcome will be a marked increase in the completion rate of the program, indicating that participants are finding the training useful and are committed to pursuing a career in the healthcare industry. Much like the increase in participation, this outcome goal is part of the expansion of the size of the program.
* **Higher Employment Rate Post-Program:** Ultimately, the goal of this program is to facilitate participants' entry into the healthcare workforce. Success would be defined by a notable increase in the rate of program graduates securing jobs in the healthcare industry within six months of program completion.

##  Award Terms

* Duration of Contract: The duration of the contract for the Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare shall be for a fixed period commencing on September 11th, 2023 and ending on December 31st, 2024. This contract shall cover twenty-four (24) months, with no possibility for extension or renewal. Based upon performance of the program a new procurement process may be initiated in 2024.
* Contract Type: The Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare contract shall be awarded on a cost-plus basis. The selected contractor shall be reimbursed for all allowable and reasonable direct costs incurred during the performance of the contract, plus an agreed-upon fixed fee to cover indirect costs and profit. The fixed fee shall be negotiated at the time of the contract award and shall not be subject to adjustment based on the contractor's actual costs.
* Award Selection: Only one (1) award will be given for the Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare contract. The award selection will be based on the evaluation of proposals submitted in response to the RFP, in accordance with the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFP documentation. The award will be made to the offeror responsible whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the procuring entity, considering both technical and cost factors.
* No Renewal Options: It is expressly understood and agreed by the parties that there shall be no renewal options available for the contract. The procuring entity reserves the right to initiate a new procurement process in 2024 to select a program provider for the subsequent contract term.
* Governing Law and Regulations: The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws and regulations of the area in which the procuring entity operates. The contractor shall be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations, as well as any additional requirements set forth by the procuring entity.
* Termination and Suspension: The procuring entity reserves the right to terminate or suspend the contract, in whole or in part, at any time during the contract period, for convenience or for cause, in accordance with the termination and suspension provisions outlined in the RFP and the resulting contract. In the event of termination or suspension, the contractor shall be entitled to receive reimbursement for all allowable and reasonable costs incurred up to the date of termination or suspension, subject to any applicable setoffs or deductions.
* Modifications: No modifications to the terms and conditions of the contract shall be binding unless made in writing and signed by the authorized representatives of both the procuring entity and the contractor. Any requested modifications must be submitted in accordance with the procedures and requirements outlined in the RFP and the resulting contract.

Indemnification and Insurance: The contractor shall indemnify and hold harmless the procuring entity, its officers, agents, and employees from all claims, losses, damages, or expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising out of or in connection with the contractor's performance of the contract. The contractor shall also maintain sufficient insurance coverage, as specified in the RFP, to protect against any risks associated with the contract's performance.

# Scope of Work

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area (WDA) is seeking proposals for comprehensive training programs designed to serve youth participants within selected areas of Carbon and Monroe Counties. The selected vendor will be responsible for developing and implementing a program that addresses the workforce needs of Pocono Counties residents, with a focus on fostering innovative solutions and encouraging collaboration throughout the project. The Scope of Work for this RFP outlines the services, tasks, and requirements expected of the selected vendor. It is designed to be connected to the project's goals, clearly organized, and realistic in its expectations while encouraging innovation and collaboration.

## Services to be Provided

The Innovative Youth Program in Healthcare is envisioned to be an immersive training and career development initiative targeted at youths within Carbon and Monroe Counties. The successful proposer will be required to design, implement, and manage this program with the following specific responsibilities: The selected vendor will be responsible for delivering the following services and primary tasks to ensure a comprehensive and effective workforce development program for Youth Participants in Carbon and Monroe Counties.

### Service Requirements

* **Program Design and Implementation:** Develop a comprehensive program that serves WIOA In-School Youth, WIOA Out-of-School Youth, TANF YDP, and other youth populations. The program should provide exposure to a broad spectrum of healthcare careers and offer specific training to prepare participants for these roles. This includes both clinical and non-clinical healthcare jobs. The proposer is encouraged to bring innovative ideas and approaches to program design.
* **Professional Development and Job Readiness Training:** Conduct professional development sessions and job readiness training. These should cover areas like communication, networking, emotional intelligence, and other job-oriented soft skills. In addition, a focus on basic computer training and occupational skill development is crucial.
* **Observational Learning Experiences:** Organize observational learning experiences in participating hospital departments. Create opportunities for participants to observe and understand the day-to-day operations and responsibilities within various healthcare roles.
* **Guest Lectures and Presentations:** Coordinate guest lectures and presentations by professionals in high-priority healthcare occupations. These sessions should offer an in-depth look at different healthcare professions, providing insights into daily responsibilities, required education, salary levels, and more.
* **Career Pathways Component:** A Career Pathway component must be incorporated into the program, enabling participants to plan for and visualize their long-term career progression within the healthcare sector.
* **Case Management:** Implement continued case management throughout the program duration to ensure participant support and retention. Case management should extend to job placement assistance post-program.
* **Program Evaluation and Reporting:** Implement robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track the program's progress and outcomes. Regular reports should be provided to the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area, detailing participant progress, program completion rates, and subsequent job placement success.

Proposers are invited to collaborate closely with the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area to create an impactful, inclusive program that addresses the needs of our youth and local healthcare industry. Innovation and cost-effective strategies are highly encouraged in the design and implementation of the program. We aim to foster a mutually beneficial and productive working relationship with the selected provider.

It is crucial that proposers develop a realistic and achievable project plan and timeline, considering the funding available and the program's operational timeframe from 9/11/23 – 12/31/24.

### General Requirements

Legal Requirements

* Compliance with local, state, and federal regulations, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws.
* Adherence to all applicable licensing, permitting, and reporting requirements for workforce development services.
* Implementation of policies and procedures that ensure the protection of client confidentiality and privacy in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and other relevant privacy laws.

Staffing and Organizational Requirements

* The staffing model should include a diverse team of professionals with experience in workforce development, case management, and job training services.
* Supervision and management of staff should ensure accountability, adherence to service standards, and continuous professional development.
* Pre-employment screening, including background checks and reference verification, must be conducted for all new hires.
* Staff training should encompass orientation, ongoing professional development, and updates on workforce development policies and best practices.
* Credentials and licensure for staff should be maintained as required by local, state, or federal regulations, or as necessary for the provision of specific services.

Data and Technology Requirements

* Provision of computer hardware and software necessary for the efficient operation of service delivery.
* Access to e-mail and internet capabilities for staff to facilitate communication, research, and resource sharing.
* Implementation of systems to assess client satisfaction, including regular surveys, feedback forms, and other customer experience measurement tools.
* Program evaluation should be conducted to measure outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and inform future service strategies.
* Records, data collection, and reporting must be maintained in compliance with local, state, and federal requirements, as well as PCWDA guidelines and performance metrics.

Financial and Compliance Requirements

* Insurance requirements must be met, including general liability, workers' compensation, and any other applicable coverage.
* Financial control procedures should be in place to ensure the appropriate use of funds, prevent fraud, and maintain financial accountability.
* Financial status reports must be submitted as requested to the PCWDA, detailing expenditures, budget adjustments, and any other relevant financial information.
* Audited financial statements should be provided as requested by the PCWDA.

Budget Requirements

* Adherence to cost standards and guidelines established by the PCWDA and relevant funding agencies.
* Identification of program funding sources, including federal, state, local, and private grants, as well as any in-kind contributions or other financial support.
* Proration of costs, as necessary, to allocate expenses fairly among multiple funding sources or partners.
* Compliance with third-party reimbursement policies, if applicable, ensuring accurate billing and payment processes.
* Incorporation of flat fees, fee-for-service revenues, and other funding mechanisms, as appropriate, to support program sustainability and cost-effectiveness.
* Submission of sub-consultant cost schedules, if applicable, detailing the expenses associated with any subcontracted services or partnerships.

**Role of Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area**

The PCWDA (Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area) is a government agency responsible for overseeing and implementing workforce development initiatives in the Pocono Counties region. This section outlines the role of the PCWDA in providing this service or program and supporting the vendor, including administrative and technical support, information access, and other responsibilities the PCWDB (Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board) plans to retain for which the vendor will not be responsible.

Administrative Support

* Contract Management: The PCWDA will manage the contractual relationship with the selected vendor, ensuring compliance with all terms and conditions, monitoring performance, and processing invoices for payment.
* Reporting and Accountability: The PCWDA will establish performance metrics and reporting requirements to ensure the vendor's alignment with the objectives of the RFP. The PCWDA will also provide oversight, conduct regular reviews, and address any performance issues.
* Coordination with Other Agencies: The PCWDA will coordinate with other government agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations to facilitate partnerships and collaboration to support the vendor's workforce development services.

Technical Support

* Guidance on Workforce Development Policies and Regulations: The PCWDA will provide information and guidance on federal, state, and local workforce development policies, regulations, and best practices to help the vendor navigate the complexities of the workforce system.
* Data and Labor Market Information: The PCWDA will provide access to relevant labor market information, workforce data, and other resources that can inform the vendor's service delivery and strategic planning.
* Training and Capacity Building: The PCWDA will offer training and capacity-building opportunities to enhance the vendor's ability to deliver high-quality workforce development services.

Information Access

* Information Sharing: The PCWDA will facilitate access to pertinent information, such as program guidelines, funding sources, and relevant stakeholders, to support the vendor's understanding of the local workforce ecosystem.
* Communication Channels: The PCWDA will maintain open lines of communication with the vendor, providing updates on policy changes, funding opportunities, and industry trends that may impact service delivery.

Responsibilities Retained by the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board

* Strategic Planning and Prioritization: The PCWDA will be responsible for establishing the strategic direction of workforce development initiatives in the region, including setting priorities, identifying target industries, and allocating resources.
* Policy Development and Advocacy: The PCWDA will advocate for effective workforce development policies and practices, engaging in policy discussions at the federal, state, and local levels.
* Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Building: The PCWDA will continue to engage stakeholders across the region, fostering collaboration and partnerships to support the overall workforce development ecosystem.

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area plays a critical role in providing administrative and technical support, information access, and strategic direction to the selected vendor for the provision of workforce development services. By partnering with the PCWDA, the vendor will benefit from the Board's expertise, resources, and commitment to building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local economy.

##  Performance Metrics and Contract Management

### Performance Metrics

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area wants to identify metrics to work collaboratively with the awarded vendor(s) to monitor and improve performance during the contract's life. The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area has identified initial metrics of interest and looks forward to working with the awarded vendor(s) to add to or refine this list during contract negotiations. The final set of performance metrics and frequency of collection will be negotiated by the successful proposer and the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area prior to the finalization of an agreement between parties and may be adjusted over time as needed.

The selected vendor's progress towards contract goals will be assessed using the following performance metrics, which include a mix of output and outcome measures:

* Number of participants enrolled in the program, and progress reports on each participant
* Percentage of participants completing the program
* Percentage of participants who show skill gains or training milestones
* Participant Satisfaction

The selected vendor will be responsible for data collection and reporting, ensuring that all necessary demographic, performance, and service data is collected, maintained, and shared with the government at specified intervals. The government will be responsible for monitoring the vendor's performance using the provided data and offering feedback to ensure that timely progress is being made towards the contract goals.

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| **Performance Metric** | **Data Source** | **Description** | **Data Collection Responsibility** | **Data Review Cadence** |
| Program Enrollment | Enrollment Report | Number of eligible individuals enrolled in the program | Vendor, Data provided to PCWDA | Biannually |
| Program Completions | Performance Reports, End of Program | Number of participants who complete the entire program | Vendor, Data provided to PCWDA | End of Program |
| Skills Improvement or Training Milestones | Skill Test and Training Milestones | Increase in job readiness skills post-training, measured via pre-and post-program assessments | Vendor, Data provided to PCWDA | Pre and Post Program |
| Participant Satisfaction | Participant Surveys | Level of participant satisfaction with the program, measured through post-program surveys. | Vendor, Data provided to PCWDA | End of Program |

### Contract Performance Monitoring

As part of the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area’s commitment to improved outcomes, the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with awarded vendors to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust service delivery based on learning what works. Reliable and relevant data is necessary to drive service improvements, facilitate compliance, inform trends to be monitored, and evaluate results and performance. As such, Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from vendors.

A. Communication and Reporting

* The selected vendor is required to maintain regular communication with the PCWDA, providing updates on progress, challenges, and any changes in the scope of work or service delivery.
* Performance reports must be submitted to the PCWDA as specified in the contract. These reports should include, but are not limited to, the following information:
	+ A summary of services provided during the reporting period.
	+ Progress towards achieving the contract's goals and performance metrics.
	+ Any challenges encountered and proposed solutions.
	+ Any changes in staffing, resources, or other factors affecting service delivery.
* Performance reports must be submitted in a format specified by the PCWDA and in compliance with any applicable local, state, or federal reporting requirements.

B. Progress Tracking and Performance Metrics

* The PCWDA and the selected vendor will jointly establish performance metrics and targets to measure the success of the contract and track progress towards achieving its goals.
* The selected vendor must consistently track and report on these performance metrics, using the data to inform service delivery improvements and course corrections as needed.

C. Collaboration and Course Corrections

* The PCWDA will actively collaborate with the selected vendor to address challenges and design course corrections throughout the contract's duration.
* The PCWDA may schedule regular meetings, site visits, or conference calls with the selected vendor to discuss progress, challenges, and potential adjustments to the scope of work or service delivery approach.
* The selected vendor is expected to be proactive in identifying challenges and proposing solutions, working closely with the PCWDA to ensure the successful implementation of the contract's goals.

# Submission Instructions

## Proposal Content

To ensure a complete and comprehensive proposal, proposers must submit a response workbook, any additional attachments as required in the response workbook, and complete all forms found in the Appendix (Section 6) of the RFP. Incomplete proposals may be considered non-responsive and may be disqualified from the evaluation process.

A. Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area RFP Application

Proposers must submit the Response workbook that may include the following information as required for each RFP, executive summary, organizational background, service delivery approach, staffing and resources, high-level budget summary, or performance metrics and outcomes.

B. Additional Attachments

Proposers must submit any additional attachments as required and stated in the RFP Application, which may include organizational charts, information on staff who will be responsible for required letters of support or references, sample reports, workplans, or other documents that demonstrate the proposer's ability to effectively track and report on performance metrics.

C. Appendix Forms

Proposers must complete all forms found in the Appendix (section 6) of this RFP.

## 3.2 Submission Instructions

To ensure a fair and transparent process, all proposers must adhere to the submission guidelines outlined below. Failure to comply with these instructions may result in disqualification.

A. How to Submit

* Proposals may be submitted electronically to the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board Office via email at shellen@pcwia.org.
* Proposals may be submitted in person or by mail at the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area Administrative office at:

811 Blakeslee Blvd Dr. E. Suite 85

Lehighton, PA 18235

* Respondents may contact the office at (484) 464-2494 or email shellen@pcwia.org to request a secure submission link.

B. Helpful Tips for Developing a Successful Proposal

* Clearly demonstrate your understanding of the scope of services and requirements outlined in the RFP.
* Provide detailed information on your organization's experience, qualifications, and capacity to deliver the required services.
* Offer innovative solutions and strategies to address the needs of the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area.
* Be concise, well-organized, and ensure your proposal is free of grammatical errors.

C. Maximum Page Counts

* The entire proposal, including all attachments and appendices, must not exceed 30 pages.
* The main narrative of the proposal should not exceed 10 pages, excluding cover letter, table of contents, and attachments.

D. Modifications of Submissions

* Any changes to the submitted proposal must be made in writing and submitted before the RFP deadline.
* Modifications must clearly indicate the changes made and reference the specific section(s) being modified.

E. Procedures for Submitting Questions

* Proposers may submit questions regarding the RFP via email to shellen@pcwia.org.
* All questions must be submitted no later than ten (10) business days before the RFP deadline.
* Answers to submitted questions will be compiled and shared with all proposers via email or posted on the PCWDA website at [www.pcwia.org](http://www.pcwia.org/).

Adherence to these submission instructions is crucial to ensuring a fair and efficient procurement process. By carefully following these guidelines, proposers can increase their chances of submitting a successful proposal and avoid potential disqualification.

# How We Choose

##  Minimum Qualifications

To ensure the successful implementation of contracted services, the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area (PCWDA) has established the following minimum qualifications for vendors interested in bidding on this opportunity. These qualifications have been carefully considered to maintain a competitive procurement process while ensuring the selected vendor meets essential standards.

1. Proposers must be legally authorized to conduct business where the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area (WDA) is located.
2. Proposers must not have been debarred, suspended, or otherwise disqualified from doing business with federal, state, or local government agencies.
3. Proposers must have at least three years of experience in workforce development, job training, or a closely related field.
4. Proposers must hold all necessary licenses, certifications, or accreditations required by local, state, or federal regulations to provide the specified services under this RFP.

The respondent may be a private for-profit, non-profit, or a government agency. Elementary and secondary schools are not eligible bidders. Eligible respondents include:

1. Institutions of higher education.
2. Community organizations;
3. Non-traditional public schools, e.g., night, or adult school, career, or technical education school.
4. Workforce intermediaries.
5. Business organizations, including chambers of commerce.
6. Labor organizations.
7. Staffing or talent companies;
8. A consortium of public agencies. If the consortium is made up of career center partners, it must include a minimum of three of the WIOA required partners.

Respondents may submit proposals in which subcontractors are identified to provide program components. Respondents may also identify organizations with which they will collaborate to enhance the project design.

Successful respondents must be able to innovate, design and develop complex programs with multiple funding sources, achieve, track and report outcomes, and meet government accounting and expense requirements. The agreement between the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area and the contractor shall specify the contractor’s role.

##  Evaluation Criteria

The selection committee will first evaluate and rank responsive RFP submissions on the following selection Evaluation Criteria and weighing factors listed below and assess that score. A respondent may receive the maximum points, a portion of this score, or no points at all, depending upon the merit of its response, as judged by the selection committee in accordance with:

**Experience and Technical Competence:** This will include a review of the organization’s qualifications, experience, and capacity in program management and as a fiduciary, as documented in the RFP Application.

**Quality of Program Design:** This will include a review of program design, innovative strategies that will be utilized, staffing plan, and financial plan, as documented in the RFP Application.

**Demonstrated Performance History and Ability to Meet Goals:** This will include a review of past performance history and goals and objectives including, without limitation, competency, responsiveness, work quality, and the ability to meet performance goals, as documented in the RFP Application

**Costs, Budget Justification, and Leverage of Funds:** This section will include a review of the Price Proposal’s line-item budget and/or budget narrative, as defined in the RFP Application. This section will also include a review of the cost effectiveness of the proposed budget. Due to the requested services, the Price Proposal will be evaluated on the percentage of administrative costs, including indirect and management fees/profit (if applicable), compared to direct program/participant costs.

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| **EVALUATION CRITERIA**  | **% ALLOCATION** |
| **Experience and Technical Competence*** Demonstrated expertise in developing and implementing training programs for youth. (10%)
* Relevant experience working with the target population and qualifications and expertise of key staff members and their roles in the proposed program (15%)
 | 25% |
| **Quality of Program Design*** Comprehensive and well-structured program plan that addresses all required components (15%)
* Other program elements that feature the inclusion of a Career Pathway component in the program design as well as accessibility of program sites for Carbon and Monroe County Youth. (15%)
* Effective internal controls or processes to meet program requirements (10%)
 | 40% |
| **Demonstrated Performance History and Ability to Meet Goals*** Proven record of accomplishment of success in implementing similar programs. (10%)
* Evidence of achieving desired outcomes, such as job placement and enrollment in skilled training programs. (5%)
* Demonstrated capacity to internally monitor ongoing performance (5%)
 | 20% |
| **Costs, Budget Justification, and Leverage of Funds*** Review of the Proposal’s line-item budget and/or budget narrative. (10%)
* Review of the cost effectiveness of the proposed budget. (5%)
 | 15% |

##  Selection Process, Award, and Protest Procedures

### Selection Schedule

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| **Schedule** |
| **Event** | **Date(s)** |
| RFP issue date | July 14th, 2023 |
| Deadline for questions | August 4th, 2023 |
| **Proposals due**  | **August 18th, 2023** |
| Anticipated contract award date | September 6th, 2023 |
| Anticipated contract execution date | September 11th, 2023 |

### Selection and Award Process

The selection and award process are designed to ensure fair, transparent, and competitive procurement, resulting in the selection of the most qualified vendor to meet the needs of the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area.

A. Round One: Responsiveness Review

* In the first round, the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board (PCWDB) will conduct a responsiveness review to determine the completeness of required documents.
* Proposals that do not meet the minimum qualifications or fail to provide all required documents may be disqualified.

B. Round Two: Evaluation Committee Assessment

* In the second round, an evaluation committee comprising PCWDB members and staff will review and score the written proposals based on the criteria outlined in the RFP.
* The evaluation committee will assess each proposal's demonstrated experience, qualifications, proposed service delivery approach, and cost-effectiveness.
* The top-scoring proposers will be invited to participate in a round three interview or demonstration.

C. Round Three: Interviews, Presentations, or Demonstrations

* In the third round, shortlisted proposers may be required to participate in interviews, presentations, or demonstrations to further demonstrate their qualifications and proposed service delivery approach.
* The evaluation committee may also request site visits to gain additional insights into the proposer's operational capabilities and service quality.

Award Decision

* Following the completion of all evaluation rounds, the evaluation committee will recommend the highest-scoring proposer to the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board for a contract award.
* The PCWDA reserves the right to negotiate with the selected proposer to refine the scope of work, deliverables, and contract terms.
* The award decision will be based on the best overall value, considering qualifications, proposed service delivery approach, and cost-effectiveness.

### Protest and Appeals Process

PCWDA reserves the right to reject all proposals received because of this RFP. All proposals received will be retained by PCWDA. PCWDA will notify all applicants as to the acceptance or rejection of proposals, and those not selected will be given an opportunity to file an appeal of their rejection, in writing, within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the rejection letter. Once the appeal has been received, the Executive Director of PCWDA will contact the rejected applicant to explain the appeal process.

# Terms and Conditions

This proposal package must be completed for all class size funding requests submitted to the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board (WDB). All proposals must be designed in full compliance with the format provided in this Request for Proposal (RFP) packet. Failure to abide by this policy will result in the rejection of your proposal.

The application resulting from these instructions does not commit the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board to award any contract for services or supplies, nor to pay for any costs incurred in preparing this application. The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals, to negotiate with all applicants, and/or cancel any part of this application package. The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board may request the applicant to participate in negotiations or to submit revisions to the proposal.

Application approval does not guarantee funding as funding for training is dependent upon receipt of funds under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and other funding sources.

**Monitoring**

The Deputy Director of the Pocono Counties WDB is responsible for reviewing all in-house and contractual operations. The primary purpose of monitoring is to evaluate program effectiveness, ensure compliance with mutually agreed goals, and to offer technical assistance and/or recommendations for corrective action to subgrantees as deemed necessary.

All proposal submitters funded will be monitored by the Pocono Counties WDB Monitor periodically. The visits may include the following areas: training, fiscal, participant files, administrative records, participants' terminations (plan vs. actual), follow-up, participant responses, monitor's observations, and problem areas.

**Financial Records, Personnel, and Close-Out Procedures**

All proposing organizations shall be responsible for keeping their own financial records. Included are regular maintenance of timesheets, individual payroll records, payroll journals, quarterly and yearly tax returns, and general ledger records. Timely tax deposits should be made with Federal, State, and local governments. Any technical assistance required will be given by the Pocono Counties WDB provided there is a mutually agreed need for such assistance.

All contractors must submit a formal close-out package to the Pocono Counties WDA within 30 days of the program's conclusion.

# Appendix

The Appendix section of this RFP provides essential forms and documents that proposers must review, complete, and submit as part of their proposal package. These forms and documents ensure compliance with various regulations, policies, and requirements associated with the provision of services. By completing and submitting these forms, proposers demonstrate their commitment to adhering to all necessary legal and ethical standards throughout the contract period.

Assurances and Certifications: This form requires proposers to review and acknowledge their understanding of, and agreement to, various assurances and certifications related to the delivery of One-Stop Operator services. These assurances and certifications include compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies.

B. Concurrence of the Collective Bargaining Agent: If applicable, proposers must obtain and submit a statement of concurrence from the relevant collective bargaining agent(s), indicating their agreement with the proposer's plans and approach to providing One-Stop Operator services.

C. Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements: Proposers must certify their commitment to maintaining a drug-free workplace in compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. This certification ensures that the proposer's organization has implemented a policy to prevent the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances in the workplace.

D. Lobbying Certification Form: This form requires proposers to certify that no federal funds have been used for lobbying activities related to the One-Stop Operator RFP. Proposers must disclose any lobbying activities and associated expenditures in accordance with federal requirements.

E. Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Ineligibility: Proposers must certify that their organization and its principals are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise ineligible to participate in federally funded contracts or programs. This certification ensures that the proposer is in good standing and capable of delivering One-Stop Operator services without risk to the PCWDB or the community it serves.

By reviewing, completing, and submitting the required forms and documents, proposers demonstrate their commitment to compliance and ethical standards in the delivery of One-Stop Operator services. Failure to submit these forms may result in the disqualification of a proposal from the evaluation process. Proposers are encouraged to carefully review and complete all forms in the Appendix to ensure a complete and compliant proposal package.

**ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

1. The Subcontractor certifies that no Federal appropriated funds awarded under this agreement will be used for lobbying activities, and that any funds other than Federal appropriated funds that have been or will be used for lobbying activities have been properly disclosed.
2. The Subcontractor agrees to provide a drug-free workplace in accordance with the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act.
3. The Subcontractor certifies that neither it, nor its principles are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency. The Subcontractor certifies that it shall provide immediate written notice to the Contractor if at any time the Subcontractor learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous because of changed circumstances.
4. The Subcontractor assures us that it has adequate administrative and accounting controls, adequate supervisory and training capacity, and sufficient materials and supplies to fulfill its obligations under the terms of this agreement.
5. Both the Contractor and Subcontractor agree to prohibit their employees from using their positions for a purpose that is, or give the appearance of, being motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves, particularly those with whom they have family, business, or other ties.
6. The Subcontractor cannot subcontract any aspect of this agreement without the written approval of the Contractor.
7. The Subcontractor assures that it will comply fully with the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; and with all applicable requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations implementing those laws, including, but not limited to 29 CFR part 34, Copeland Anti-Kickback Act; Davis Bacon Act; Compliance with all applicable standards, orders, or requirements issued under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Environmental Protection Agency regulations for contacts/grants exceeding $100,000; Mandatory standards and policies relating to energy efficiency that are contained in the state energy conservation plan issued in compliance with Energy Policy and Conservation Act; Patent rights; and Copyrights and rights to data.
8. The Subcontractor assures us it complies with their respective State's Unemployment Compensation and Workers Compensation Laws.
9. The Subcontractor assures that it will comply with Section I-111 of the Pennsylvania School Code (24 P.S. ' 1-111) and its regulations at 22 PA Code § 8.1 - 8.4.
10. The Subcontractor assures us it will fully comply with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and all Federal and State Regulations.
11. The Subcontractor assures us that it will abide by the Pocono Counties WDB property purchase procedures when purchasing any non-expendable property. This applies to any non-expendable property purchased using funds from this agreement. Written approval for the purchase of non-expendable property must be received from Pocono Counties WDB prior to its acquisition. Please contact Pocono Counties WDB regarding these procedures.
12. The Subcontractor will comply with the Pennsylvania Right-To-Know Law, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101-3104 (“RTKL”).
13. The Subcontractor will comply with the Federal, State, and Local Child Labor Laws; the WIOA program regulations published in the Federal Register; the Title I Youth Policies and Procedures published by the Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership.
14. The Subcontractor assures it will comply with the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act. (40 U.S.C. §§ 327-333).
15. The subcontractor assures that they will comply with the Confidentiality Policy of the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Area. (A primary obligation of all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act personnel, contractors and sub-contractors are to safeguard all information, either written or spoken, regarding any client. Agency personnel are defined as anyone who functions in any service and/or administrative capacity. These individuals are bound by WIOA policy not to reveal the identity circumstances of any past or current clients, except to authorized school or agency personnel working with our clients or by consent of the client.
16. The Subcontractor will assure that no funds under WIOA shall be used to assist, promote, or deter Union organization.
17. The Subcontractor assures it will comply with Minimum Wage Requirements.

CONCURRENCE OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGENT

To ensure the most effective development of employment and training opportunities, the Subcontractor must obtain written concurrence from the appropriate bargaining agent where a collective bargaining agreement exists with the participating employer covering occupations in which training or subsidized employment is proposed. Such concurrence shall apply to the elements of the proposed activity which affect the bargaining agreement, such as occupation, wages, and benefits.

Is the occupation(s) in which employment and training is to be offered subject to a collective bargaining agreement?

YES \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, has the appropriate bargaining representatives agreed on the employment and training activities associated with it?

YES \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If no, please comment \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Please indicate the name, title and union affiliation of the appropriate bargaining representative.

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(Signature) (Title) (Date)

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(Union Affiliation)

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(Signature of Chief Administrator)

**CERTIFICATION REGARDING DRUG-FREE**

**WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS**

1. The Subcontractor certifies that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:
	1. Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the Subcontractor's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition:
	2. Establishing an ongoing drug-free awareness program to inform employees about--
		1. The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
		2. The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
		3. Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and
		4. The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
	3. Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);
	4. Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that, as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will—
		1. Abide by the terms of the statement; and
		2. Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;
	5. Notifying the agency in writing, within ten calendar days after receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position, title, to every grant officer or other designee on whose contract activity the convicted employee was working, unless the Federal agency has designated a central point for the receipt of such notices. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant;
	6. Taking one of the following actions within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2) with respect to any employee who is so convicted—
		1. Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination. Consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or
		2. Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency;
	7. Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f).
2. The Subcontractor may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:
3. Place of Performance (Street Address, City, County, State, Zip Code)

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Check ( ) if there are workplaces that are not identified here.

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Name of Organization

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Name and Title of Authorized Signatory

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

LOBBYING CERTIFICATION FORM

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal contract, the making of any federal grant, the making of any federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed under Section 1352, Title 31, U. S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for such failure.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, AND INELIGIBILITY**

Subcontractor's Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employer ID Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The contract you are entering into involves the payment of State and or Federal Funds. Please complete and sign this Contract Certification.

**STATE FUNDED CONTRACT CERTIFICATION**

This certification is required by Management Directive 215.9, which implements Executive Order 1990-3.

The prospective recipient of State funds certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible, from participation in this transaction by any State or Federal Department or agency.

**FEDERALLY FUNDED CONTRACT CERTIFICATION**

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension. 29 CFR Part 98. Section 98.510, Participants responsibilities. The regulations were published as Part VII of the May 26, 1988 Federal Register (pages 19160-19211).

1. The prospective recipient of Federal Assistance funds certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
2. Where the prospective recipient of Federal assistance funds is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

**Before completing this certification, read the instructions for certification on the reverse of this form.**

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Name and Title of Authorized Representative

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Signature Date

#### Instructions for Certification

1. By signing this certification and submitting it with this proposal, the prospective recipient of State and/or Federal assistance funds is providing certification as set out below.

2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective recipient of State and/or Federal assistance funds knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the State and/or Federal Government may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

3. The prospective recipient of State and/or Federal assistance funds shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective recipient of State and/or Federal assistance funds learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.

4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded" as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the person to whom this proposal is submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.

5. The prospective recipient of State and/or Federal assistance funds further agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transactions with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the Department.

1. The prospective recipient of State and/or Federal assistance funds further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
2. A participant covered transaction may rely upon certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. For contracts involving Federal funds, each participant may, but is not required, to check the List of Parties Excluded from Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs.
3. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system or records to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
4. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the State and/or Federal Government, the Department may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.