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**Request for Proposals (RFP) for**

**Youth Reentry Services**

**Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area**

**RFP # 135-24-01**

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| **RFP SUMMARY:**  The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area is seeking proposals for comprehensive re-entry services targeting WIOA-eligible out-of-school youth aged 16-24 in Carbon and Monroe Counties. The program aims to facilitate the successful reintegration of justice-involved youth into the workforce and community, thereby reducing recidivism rates. The selected vendor will be responsible for participant recruitment, individualized service planning, delivery of core program services, and follow-up support while also coordinating with local partners to maximize resources and outcomes. | |
|  | |
| **RFP ISSUE DATE** | August 19th, 2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE** | September 29th, 2024 |
| **PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE** | A pre-proposal conference will be held on 9/6/2024 at 10 AM EST. It is recommended that all proposers attend.  Pre-Proposal Conference Link: [**ZOOM LINK**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81077376005?pwd=6eJGE9w453XUv6JiMEYrtYVgShkzag.1) |
| **DEADLINE FOR QUESTIONS** | The deadline for questions is 9/11/2024 at 4:30 PM EST. As indicated below, questions and/or inquiries must be submitted in writing to Samuel Hellen, the RFP Official Contact. |
| **PROPOSAL**  **SUBMISSION PROCESS** | Proposals can be submitted by:  By Mail: 811 Blakeslee Blvd. Dr. E, Suite 85, Lehighton, PA 18235  By Email: [shellen@pcwia.org](mailto:shellen@pcwia.org)  Online via OneDrive: [**Submission Link**](https://pcwia-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/shellen_pcwia_org/El70BnU7W1VNozTxmY5wJQEB9dXbJ02xdSEXiy9ymTSTIQ?e=cdDRGf) |
| **RFP WEBSITE** | <https://pcwia.org/rfps/> |
| **RFP OFFICIAL CONTACT** | Samuel Hellen, Executive Director. Phone: 484-464-2494. [shellen@pcwia.org](mailto:shellen@pcwia.org) |

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8/19/2024

Dear Members of the Vendor Community

I am pleased to announce the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for our Youth Re-Entry Services program, a strategically significant initiative aimed at supporting justice-involved youth in Carbon and Monroe Counties. Our vision is to empower these young individuals, aged 16-24, by facilitating their successful reintegration into the workforce and community, reducing recidivism rates, and fostering long-term stability.

This program builds on the success of our existing efforts and seeks to expand our reach and impact. We recognize the challenges faced by justice-involved youth and the importance of innovative solutions to address these issues effectively. Our strategic direction focuses on individualized service planning, comprehensive support services, and strong partnerships with local employers and educational institutions to create pathways to employment and personal growth.

In developing this RFP, we have engaged with stakeholders, including community organizations and subject matter experts, to gather valuable insights and feedback. We are committed to fostering a collaborative relationship with vendors and are excited to work together to achieve our shared goals. To facilitate this collaboration, we will be hosting a pre-proposal conference, details of which will be provided in the RFP document.

We are grateful for your interest in this opportunity and look forward to receiving your innovative proposals that will help us drive positive change in the lives of justice-involved youth in our community.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Samuel Hellen

Samuel Hellen - Executive Director

Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area

**Table of Contents**

[1. The Opportunity 4](#_Toc1814531268)

[1.1 Summary 4](#_Toc1270576115)

[1.2 Background 4](#_Toc1289653973)

[1.3 Outcome Goals 6](#_Toc428195715)

[1.4 Award Terms 6](#_Toc1079431595)

[2. Scope of Work 7](#_Toc36830925)

[2.1 Services to be Provided 9](#_Toc308935034)

[2.2 Performance Metrics and Contract Management 12](#_Toc1189592904)

[Performance Metrics 12](#_Toc678981023)

[Contract Performance Monitoring 13](#_Toc377273468)

[3. Submission 13](#_Toc365199200)

[3.1 Proposal Content 13](#_Toc1403416290)

[3.2 Submission Instructions 14](#_Toc175150331)

[4. How We Choose 16](#_Toc741253277)

[4.1 Minimum Qualifications 16](#_Toc1814174726)

[4.2 Evaluation Criteria 16](#_Toc812258563)

[4.3 Selection Process, Award, and Protest Procedures 18](#_Toc1223089227)

[Selection Schedule 18](#_Toc1480217219)

[Selection and Award Process 18](#_Toc892822058)

[Protest and Appeals Process 19](#_Toc1070677228)

[5. Terms and Conditions 20](#_Toc736110277)

[6. Appendix 21](#_Toc517812421)

# **The Opportunity**

## Summary

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area is seeking proposals from qualified providers to deliver re-entry services for out-of-school youth ages 16-24 in Carbon and Monroe Counties utilizing WIOA Title I funding. This program aims to reduce recidivism rates and support successful transitions into the workforce for justice-involved youth.

Services will include developing individualized re-entry plans, providing comprehensive assessments, career counseling, financial literacy education, supportive services, and follow-up assistance. Key components include referrals to PA CareerLink® for training opportunities, work experience placements, and apprenticeships. Providers must incorporate career pathway development, partner with local education/training entities, and coordinate closely with PA CareerLink® offices.

The selected provider will be responsible for participant recruitment, WIOA eligibility determination, intake assessments, case management, and tracking of mandated performance outcomes. Services should address barriers to employment while building job readiness skills. The program must demonstrate a proven ability to engage justice-involved youth and produce measurable results in areas such as skills gains, job placement, and retention.

Ideal candidates will have experience serving at-risk youth populations and collaborating with the criminal justice system and workforce partners. The provider should be prepared to serve multiple cohorts per year, with the capacity and staffing ratios to support intensive case management. Proposals should outline strategies to maximize resources, ensure program sustainability, and achieve positive outcomes for this high-need population

## Background

**Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area Overview**

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

**Youth Re-Entry Overview**

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area has been operating a youth re-entry program since 2020, serving justice-involved youth ages 18-24 in Carbon and Monroe Counties. This program aims to reduce recidivism rates and support successful transitions into the workforce for out-of-school youth. Over the past three years, this program has provided comprehensive re-entry services including individualized planning, career counseling, skills development, and supportive services. By continuing established partnerships with PA CareerLink® offices, local education and training providers, and community organizations to offer an integrated approach to youth reintegration.

As we look to continue and expand our youth re-entry efforts, we face significant challenges in addressing the high recidivism rates in our service area. According to the 2022 Pennsylvania Recidivism Report, Carbon County has a recidivism rate of 63%, while Monroe County's rate is 57%. These rates are substantially higher than desired, indicating a critical need for enhanced re-entry support.

The impact of unemployment on recidivism is particularly concerning. Data shows that justice-involved individuals without employment have a 72% recidivism rate, compared to 57.2% for those with full or part-time employment. This 14.8 percentage point difference underscores the crucial role of workforce development in reducing recidivism.

In 2022, Carbon County recorded 235 arrests with a 49.8% re-arrest rate and a 42.6% reincarceration rate. Monroe County had 1,151 arrests with a 41% re-arrest rate and a 41.2% reincarceration rate. These statistics highlight the ongoing challenges in our communities and the need for targeted interventions.

By continuing to enhance the youth re-entry program, we aim to address these challenges head-on. We seek to provide more comprehensive support, increase employment opportunities, and ultimately reduce recidivism rates among justice-involved youth in Carbon and Monroe Counties. This RFP represents our commitment to improving outcomes for this vulnerable population and strengthening our communities.

**Needs Statement**

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area faces a significant challenge in addressing the high recidivism rates among out-of-school youth in Carbon and Monroe Counties. According to the 2022 Pennsylvania Recidivism Report, Carbon County has a recidivism rate of 63%, while Monroe County's rate is 57%. These rates are exacerbated by the lack of employment opportunities for justice-involved youth, with those without employment experiencing a 72% recidivism rate compared to 57.2% for those with employment. This disparity highlights the critical need for targeted re-entry services that not only address immediate employment needs but also provide comprehensive support to facilitate successful reintegration into the community.

The proposed program aims to mitigate these issues by offering a structured re-entry plan that includes career counseling, skills development, and supportive services tailored to the unique needs of out-of-school youth. By leveraging WIOA Title I funding, the program will focus on reducing barriers to employment through individualized support, including transportation, housing assistance, and financial literacy education. The program will also emphasize the importance of follow-up services to ensure sustained engagement and prevent re-offending.

Without such interventions, the community risks perpetuating a cycle of re-arrest and reincarceration, which not only affects the individuals involved but also places a significant burden on local resources and community safety. By addressing these challenges head-on, the program seeks to create a pathway to stability and self-sufficiency for youth, ultimately contributing to lower recidivism rates and a more resilient workforce in the Pocono Counties.

## Outcome Goals

1. Increased Employment Rates: Facilitate successful employment or training referrals for at least 60% of program participants within six months of program completion. This includes securing full-time or part-time positions, which are shown to significantly reduce the likelihood of re-offending.
2. Skill Development and Educational Advancement: Ensure that 35% of participants demonstrate measurable skill gains in literacy, numeracy, or vocational skills, as evidenced by pre- and post-program assessments. Additionally, support participants in achieving educational milestones, such as obtaining a GED or enrolling in further education or training programs.
3. Sustainable Community Reintegration: Establish robust support systems that enable at least 75% of participants to remain engaged in positive community activities and avoid re-arrest for at least one year post-program. This includes access to mentoring, counseling, and community services that foster long-term stability.
4. Enhanced Access to Supportive Services: Ensure that 90% of participants receive necessary supportive services, such as housing assistance, transportation, and childcare, to remove barriers to successful re-entry and employment. This comprehensive support is crucial for maintaining participant engagement and preventing recidivism.

## Award Terms

* Duration of Contract: The initial contract duration for Youth Reentry Services shall be for a fixed period commencing on November 1st, 2024, and ending on December 31st, 2026. This contract shall cover twenty-five (25) months.
* Contract Type: The youth reentry services 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 agreement's performance, or an agreed-upon fixed fee to cover indirect costs and profit, or a combination of these two items. 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 Youth Reentry contract. The award selection will be based on evaluating proposals submitted in response to the RFP using 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.
* Renewal Options: Upon completion of the contract term, a renewal period of one (1) or two (2) years may be exercised based on mutual agreement between the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area and the vendor. The procuring entity reserves the right to initiate a new procurement process in 2026, or after completion of the renewal option, to select Youth Reentry Services for the subsequent contract term.
* Governing Law and Regulations: The Youth Reentry contract shall be governed by and construed by the laws and regulations of the area where 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 Youth Reentry contract, in whole or in part, at any time during the contract period, for convenience or cause, by the termination and suspension provisions outlined in the RFP and the resulting contract. In the event of termination or suspension, the contractor shall 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 Youth Reentry 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 using 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 Youth Reentry 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 selected subcontractor will provide comprehensive re-entry services for WIOA-eligible out-of-school youth ages 16-24 in Carbon and Monroe Counties. The goal is to assist justice-involved youth in successfully transitioning back into the workforce and community while reducing recidivism rates. The subcontractor should bring innovative approaches to engaging and supporting justice-involved youth while adhering to WIOA regulations. We welcome creative ideas for program design and service delivery that can help achieve the goals of reducing recidivism and increasing workforce participation for this population.

The selected subcontractor will be responsible for delivering a comprehensive suite of re-entry services for WIOA-eligible out-of-school youth aged 16-24 in Carbon and Monroe Counties. The primary objective is to facilitate the successful reintegration of justice-involved youth into the workforce and community, thereby reducing recidivism rates.

**Participant Recruitment and Eligibility**

The subcontractor will receive referrals from partner agencies and the justice system, conduct thorough intake and needs assessments, and determine WIOA eligibility, assisting with the required documentation. Eligible youth will be enrolled into the program, with an estimated annual volume of 25-50 participants across both counties.

**Individual Service Planning**

Each participant will have an individualized employment plan (IEP) developed, identifying appropriate services, training, and support needs. The plans will include setting short-term and long-term goals focused on reducing recidivism and increasing employment opportunities.

**Core Program Services**

The subcontractor will provide a range of services, including basic career services such as job search assistance and labor market information, as well as individual career services like comprehensive assessments and career planning. Educational services, including tutoring and study skills training, will be offered alongside occupational skills training aligned with in-demand industries. Participants will have access to work experiences, internships, and on-the-job training opportunities. Leadership development activities, financial literacy education, and entrepreneurial skills training will also be provided, along with adult mentoring and comprehensive guidance/counseling.

**Support Services**

The subcontractor will assist participants with transportation, childcare, housing, and other support needs. Connections to physical and mental health services will be facilitated, and assistance with work-related expenses, such as uniforms and tools, will be provided. Accommodation for youth with disabilities will also be ensured.

**Follow-Up Services**

A critical component of the program is the provision of 12 months of follow-up support after program exit. This includes tracking employment retention, educational progress, and recidivism, as well as offering ongoing mentoring, support services, and career guidance as needed.

**Partnerships and Coordination**

The subcontractor will coordinate closely with PA CareerLink® offices to maximize resources and develop relationships with local employers for job placement. Partnerships with education and training providers will be established to offer relevant skills development, and collaboration with probation/parole and other justice system partners will be essential.

**Data Collection and Reporting**

The subcontractor will track all required WIOA performance indicators, conduct pre/post assessments to measure skill gains, and provide monthly participant progress reports. Outcomes will be analyzed by different demographic groups to ensure equitable service delivery.

**Continuous Quality Improvement**

The subcontractor will participate in regular meetings with Workforce Development Board staff to review performance data and identify areas for improvement. Service delivery approaches will be adjusted as needed to enhance outcomes. The subcontractor is expected to serve approximately 25-50 youth annually, with key performance targets including 60% of participants gaining employment or enrolling in education/training within six months of program completion, 35% demonstrating measurable skill gains. Innovative approaches to engaging and supporting justice-involved youth are encouraged, with adherence to WIOA regulations. The subcontractor will work collaboratively with the Workforce Development Board to refine and improve the program model over time.

## Services to be Provided

The selected subcontractor will provide comprehensive re-entry services for WIOA-eligible out-of-school youth ages 16-24 in Carbon and Monroe Counties. The goal is to assist justice-involved youth in successfully transitioning back into the workforce and community while reducing recidivism rates.

**Service Requirements**

The subcontractor will be responsible for delivering the following core components:

Participant Recruitment and Eligibility

* Receive referrals from partner agencies and justice system
* Conduct intake and comprehensive needs assessments
* Determine WIOA eligibility and assist with required documentation
* Enroll eligible youth into the program

Estimated volume: 25-50 youth annually combined Carbon and Monroe County

**Individual Service Planning**

* Develop individualized employment plans (IEPs) for each participant
* Identify appropriate services, training, and support needs
* Set short-term and long-term goals

**Core Program Services**

* Provide basic career services (e.g. job search assistance, labor market information)
* Deliver individual career services (e.g. comprehensive assessments, career planning)
* Offer educational services (e.g. tutoring, study skills training, dropout prevention)
* Provide occupational skills training aligned with in-demand industries
* Facilitate work experiences, internships, and on-the-job training opportunities
* Offer leadership development activities
* Provide financial literacy education
* Deliver entrepreneurial skills training as appropriate
* Provide adult mentoring and comprehensive guidance/counseling

**Supportive Services**

* Assist with transportation, childcare, housing, and other support needs
* Provide or connect youth to needed physical/mental health services
* Offer assistance with work-related expenses (e.g. uniforms, tools)
* Provide accommodations for youth with disabilities

**Follow-Up Services**

* Provide 12 months of follow-up support after program exit
* Track employment retention, educational progress, and recidivism
* Offer ongoing mentoring, support services, and career guidance as needed

**Partnerships and Coordination**

* Coordinate closely with PA CareerLink® offices to maximize resources
* Develop relationships with local employers for job placement
* Partner with education/training providers to offer relevant skills development
* Collaborate with probation/parole and other justice system partners

**Data Collection and Reporting**

* Track all required WIOA performance indicators
* Conduct pre/post assessments to measure skill gains
* Provide monthly participant progress reports
* Analyze outcomes by different demographic groups

**Continuous Quality Improvement**

* Participate in regular meetings with Workforce Development Board staff
* Review performance data to identify areas for improvement
* Adjust service delivery approach as needed to improve outcomes

**General Requirements**

**Legal Requirements:**

* Comply with all WIOA regulations and local workforce development policies
* Adhere to confidentiality and data privacy laws regarding youth records

**Staffing Requirements:**

* Maintain appropriate staff-to-participant ratios (to be proposed by subcontractor)
* Ensure staff have relevant experience working with justice-involved youth
* Provide ongoing staff training on evidence-based practices for youth re-entry

**Data and Technology Requirements:**

* Utilize the state's workforce development case management system (CWDS)
* Have the capability to collect, analyze, and report on required performance metrics
* Conduct regular participant satisfaction surveys

**Financial Requirements:**

* Maintain required insurance coverage
* Submit monthly invoices and financial reports
* Undergo annual financial audit

**Budget Requirements:**

* Propose a detailed budget aligned with WIOA allowable costs
* Identify any leveraged or matching funds to supplement WIOA funding
* Outline a plan to ensure program sustainability beyond the initial contract period

The subcontractor will work collaboratively with the Workforce Development Board to refine the program model and implementation plan. Key milestones include:

* Program launch within 60 days of contract execution
* Quarterly reviews of performance metrics and outcomes
* Annual program evaluation and improvement planning

**Role of Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area**

In delivering youth reentry services, the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area will assume a critical oversight and facilitative role, ensuring an effective partnership with the selected service provider. The WDA's responsibilities are multifaceted, aimed at supporting the service provider while safeguarding the program's integrity and alignment with strategic objectives. Central to the WDA's role is establishing a governance framework to collaboratively oversee the youth reentry services, underscored by regular progress reviews and strategic alignment sessions with key board members and management.

The WDA will provide administrative and logistical support to the service provider, including providing necessary office space or tools, access to essential financial records, and facilitating stakeholder interactions. PCWDA will maintain open lines of communication, offering policy guidance and regulatory updates to keep the service provider abreast of relevant WIOA Title I policies, regulatory mandates, and compliance standards. This includes orchestrating quality assurance measures and performance evaluations against established metrics to monitor service quality and compliance. The PCWDA will implement a comprehensive monitoring framework to regularly assess youth reentry operations, including subcontracted services, identify areas for improvement, and ensure corrective measures are promptly enacted.

While the operational management of youth reentry activities will be the purview of the service provider, the WDA will oversee financial oversight roles, including budget approvals, expenditure oversight, and the alignment of youth reentry practices with the WDA’s strategic goals. Contract management will be a critical function of the WDA, handling contract negotiations, dispute resolutions, and adjustments to service scope as necessitated by evolving program needs or strategic shifts.

## Performance Metrics and Contract Management

### Performance Metrics

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area is committed to establishing a collaborative relationship with the selected vendor(s) to monitor and enhance performance throughout the contract's duration. We have identified initial performance metrics and anticipate refining these collaboratively with the awarded vendor(s) during contract negotiations.

**The final set of performance metrics, along with their collection frequency, will be agreed upon before finalizing the contract and may be adjusted as necessary over time.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Metric** | **Data Source** | **Data Collection Frequency** | **Data Collection Responsibility** | **Data Review Cadence** |
| Participant Enrollment and Retention | Enrollment and Retention Records | Monthly | Vendor | Quarterly |
| Employment and Education Outcomes – 60% Employment or Training After Exit | Employment records, educational enrollment documentation | Monthly | Vendor | Quarterly |
| Skill Development – 35% Measurable Skill Gains | Pre/Post Assessment | At program entry and exit | Vendor | Semi-Annually |
| Participant Satisfaction | Participant Survey | Bi-Annually | Vendor | Semi-Annually |

### Contract Performance Monitoring

As part of the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area’s commitment to improved outcomes, the PCWDA 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 the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from vendors.

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area will actively engage with the vendor through regular data-driven discussions to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. We will conduct monthly meetings to review real-time performance data and address any challenges promptly. These meetings will include executive-level discussions focused on operational insights, allowing for swift troubleshooting and replication of successful strategies.

Additionally, quarterly reviews will be held to assess progress towards performance targets and identify opportunities for service delivery enhancements. The vendor is expected to provide comprehensive performance reports, including demographic and service data, to facilitate these evaluations. We reserve the right to request additional data and metrics as needed to ensure compliance and drive service improvements.

By fostering a collaborative environment, we aim to achieve the contract's goals effectively and enhance outcomes for justice-involved youth in Carbon and Monroe Counties.

# **Submission**

## Proposal Content

To ensure a complete and comprehensive proposal, proposers must submit a response workbook and 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 disqualified from the evaluation process.

1. 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.

1. Additional Attachments

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

1. Appendix Forms

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

## 3.2 Submission Instructions

All proposers must adhere to the submission guidelines outlined below to ensure a fair and transparent process. Please comply with these instructions to avoid disqualification.

A. How to Submit

* Proposals may be submitted electronically to the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board Office via email at [shellen@pcwia.org](mailto: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](mailto:shellen@pcwia.org) to request a secure submission link.

B. Helpful Tips for Developing a Successful Proposal

* 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 and well-organized, and ensure your proposal is free of grammatical errors.

C. Maximum Page Counts

* The proposal, including all attachments and appendices, must not exceed 30 pages.
* The main narrative of the proposal should not exceed ten pages, excluding the 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 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](mailto: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 ensures 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 successfully implement the Youth Reentry 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 have been kept from being 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 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.

Respondents may submit proposals in which subcontractors are identified to provide program components.  Respondents may also identify organizations with which to 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 Youth Reentry Services Contractor shall specify the Youth Reentry Services role.

## Evaluation Criteria

The selection committee will first evaluate and rank responsive RFP submissions on the following selection Evaluation Criteria, weigh the 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:

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

**Quality of Service Design:** This will include a review of Youth Reentry design, innovative strategies 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, experience working with reentry population, as documented in the RFP Application.

**Costs, Budget Justification, and Leverage of Funds:** This section will review 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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EVALUATION CRITERIA** | **% ALLOCATION** |
| **Qualifications, Experience, and Capacity**   * Organization’s qualifications, experience, and capacity to manage the program effectively. * Evaluation of the proposer’s past performance in similar projects, technical competence, and fiduciary capacity. * Proposers demonstrating extensive relevant experience and a proven track record of successful program management will receive higher scores. | 30% |
| **Service Delivery or Project Approach**   * Evaluate the quality and innovation of the proposed service delivery or project approach. * The assessment will consider the design of the service, the strategies employed, the staffing plan, and the financial plan. * Proposals presenting a clear, innovative, and feasible approach to delivering the services will receive the highest scores. | 25% |
| **Project Management, Performance Improvement, and Communication**   * Demonstration of the proposer’s ability to manage the project, improve performance, and communicate effectively. * This includes an evaluation of the project management plan, strategies for performance improvement, and communication protocols. * Proposers demonstrating strong project management skills and a commitment to continuous improvement will score highly. | 25% |
| **Cost Proposal and Narrative**   * Review of the cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget, including the Price Proposal’s line-item budget and/or budget narrative. * The evaluation will consider the percentage of administrative costs compared to direct program/participant costs. * Proposals offering a cost-effective budget with clear justification and leveraging additional funds will score higher. | 25% |

## Selection Process, Award, and Protest Procedures

### Selection Schedule

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Schedule** | |
| **Event** | **Date(s)** |
| RFP issue date | 8/19/2024 |
| Pre-proposal conference | 9/6/2024 |
| Deadline for questions | 9/11/2024 |
| **Proposals due** | **9/27/2024** |
| Interviews with shortlisted proposers | 10/4/2024 |
| Anticipated contract award date | 10/11/2024 |
| Anticipated contract execution date | 11/1/2024 |

### Selection and Award Process

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

1. Round One: Responsiveness Review
   1. In the first round, the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board (PCWDB) will conduct a responsiveness review to determine the completeness of required documents.
   2. Proposals that do not meet the minimum qualifications or fail to provide all required documents may be disqualified.
2. Round Two: Evaluation Committee Assessment
   1. In the second round, an evaluation committee comprising Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board members and staff will review and score the written proposals based on the criteria outlined in the RFP.
   2. The evaluation committee will assess each proposal's demonstrated experience, qualifications, proposed service delivery approach, and cost-effectiveness.
   3. The top-scoring proposers will be invited to participate in a round three interview or demonstration.
3. Round Three: Interviews, Presentations, or Demonstrations
   1. In the third round, shortlisted proposers may be required to further participate in interviews, presentations, or demonstrations to demonstrate their qualifications and proposed service delivery approach.
   2. The evaluation committee may also request site visits to gain additional insights into the proposer's operational capabilities and service quality.
4. Award Decision
   1. After completing all evaluation rounds, the committee will recommend the highest-scoring proposer to the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board for contract award.
   2. The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area reserves the right to negotiate with the selected proposer to refine the scope of work, deliverables, and contract terms.
   3. The award decision will be based on the best overall value, considering qualifications, proposed service delivery approach, and cost-effectiveness.

### Protest and Appeals Process

The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area reserves the right to reject all proposals received because of this RFP. The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area will retain all proposals received. PCWDA will notify all applicants about the acceptance or rejection of proposals, and those not selected will be allowed to file an appeal of their rejection in writing within thirty (30) days of receiving 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. All proposals must be designed in full compliance with the format provided in this Request for Proposal (RFP) packet. Please abide by this policy to avoid 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 or 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 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 observations, and problem areas.

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

All proposing organizations shall be responsible for keeping their financial records. Regular maintenance of timesheets, individual payroll records, payroll journals, quarterly and yearly tax returns, and general ledger records are included. Timely tax deposits should be made with Federal, State, and local governments. The Pocono Counties Workforce Development Board will give any technical assistance required, provided there is a mutually agreed need for such aid.

All contractors must submit a formal close-out package to the Pocono Counties Workforce Development Area 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 providing 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 Youth Reentry 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 Youth Reentry 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 requires proposers to certify that no federal funds have been used for lobbying activities related to the Youth Reentry Services 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 Youth Reentry services without risk to the PCWDB or the community it serves.

Proposers demonstrate their commitment to compliance and ethical standards in delivering Reentry Services by reviewing, completing, and submitting the required forms and documents. Please submit these forms to avoid 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

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 whom 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 because 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 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 all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
2. A participant-covered transaction may rely upon a 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. Each participant may, but is not required, to check the List of Parties Excluded from Procurement or Nonprocurement Programs for contracts involving federal funds.
3. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishing a system or records to render the certification required by this clause in good faith. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings normally possesses.
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.