



Request for Proposals

to

**Deliver Workforce Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers,
and to Provide Business Services to Employers**

and

**Serve as a One-Stop Operator
for Eastern Kentucky's Kentucky Career Centers**

**Services to be Performed
During the 2021-22 Program Year
(July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022)**

Issued by
The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

April 9, 2021

I. Description of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) and Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. Local Workforce Area

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) is the workforce development strategy and policy board for the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. local workforce area, formed and certified under the provisions of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2015. The Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. local workforce area consists of these 23 counties in far Eastern Kentucky: Bell, Breathitt, Carter, Clay, Elliott, Floyd, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Wolfe.

Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. (EKCEP), Inc. is a non-profit corporation that serves as the administrative entity and staff for the EKWIB, executing the EKWIB's decisions and pursuing its objectives. However, EKCEP, Inc. does not provide Direct Workforce Services to clients of the workforce system, preferring instead to contract for the delivery of those services. Although Direct Workforce Services are provided through contractors, EKCEP staff and/or partners may provide workshops, seminars, etc. (e.g., soft skills training, computer literacy) that are aimed at actively engaging private industry in ways that support the placement efforts and other Direct Workforce Services provided by its contractors. Once those contracts have been awarded, EKCEP, Inc. interacts administratively with the contractors, providing leadership, guidance, professional development, technical assistance, monitoring, and other activities to ensure that the contractors faithfully execute the strategies and policies of the EKWIB.

Primary funding for EKCEP, Inc. comes from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, through the Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development, under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). EKCEP also provides services funded by grants from a variety of other sources, both public and private.

II. Services Solicited by This Request for Proposals (RFP)

This Request for Proposals (RFP) seeks proposals for organizations to perform one or two elements of workforce service delivery in one or more counties in the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. local workforce area. Those elements are:

- Deliver Direct Workforce Services to employers and job-seeking clients through the full-service career center(s), affiliate career center(s), or other service outlet(s) associated with Eastern Kentucky's workforce services network in the counties proposed to be served by the responding organization.

- Serve as the One-Stop Operator for Eastern Kentucky’s workforce services network in the EKCEP counties where a full-service career center (i.e., one-stop center) is located. The duties of the One-Stop Operator include coordinating the services of one-stop network partners at the full-service career center(s) and any associated affiliate career center(s) and other service outlet(s) in the counties they propose to serve. Proposals to serve as a One-Stop Operator will be accepted only from organizations that propose to serve either or both of the two counties in the EKCEP service area that currently have a full-service career center: Perry County (Hazard) and Floyd County (Prestonsburg). Organizations proposing to serve areas that do not include Perry and Floyd counties should not respond to the One-Stop Operator portion of this Request for Proposals.

These two elements are explained in detail below (see Section II-A, “Direct Workforce Services,” and Section II-B, “One-Stop Operator”).

Because the functions of the One-Stop Operator are closely interconnected with the provision of Direct Workforce Services, and because the funding available to support the functions of the One-Stop Operator is very limited, EKCEP has chosen to accept proposals to serve the counties that have full-service career centers only from agencies that are able and willing to perform both the Direct Workforce Services and One-Stop Operator functions. (The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA] would allow EKCEP to perform the functions of the One-Stop Operator, but EKCEP prefers to contract with a Direct Workforce Services provider for these functions.)

Upon initial selection of a preferred proposal (or proposals), EKCEP and the EKWIB retain the right to negotiate with the successful organization (or organizations) to modify the proposal(s) and determine the terms of the contract before making the award(s) final. If such negotiations fail to produce an agreement, EKCEP and the EKWIB reserve the right to retract their approval of any proposal and select another proposal.

The duration of the contract awarded on the basis of this RFP will be one year (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). However, based on successful performance, the EKWIB may choose to renew the contract annually for up to three additional years.

A. Direct Workforce Services

1. Introduction

Direct Workforce Services are workforce development services for:

- **Employers** — These services help these employers find, train, and hire needed workers

- **Individuals** — These services help eligible individual clients prepare for, obtain, and succeed in self-sustaining employment.

Services to employers will focus primarily on businesses and industries that fall within the five sectors of emphasis identified by the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB), which are:

- Healthcare.
- Skilled Trades.
- Energy Production and Transmission.
- Business Services, including Information Technology and Customer Service.
- Manufacturing.

The staff of Direct Workforce Services providers will help these employers find and, when necessary, train or otherwise prepare workers to fill the positions that the employers' businesses need. Much of this work will be done as a part of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or other agreements between employers and the workforce development system that identify an employer's workforce needs and define a plan by which those needs will be met by the collaborative efforts of the workforce development system, the employers, and other partners as needed.

Many of the individual clients served will be selected, recruited, or otherwise engaged because they are appropriate candidates for the positions area employers are seeking to fill. Individual clients who are eligible for Direct Workforce Services include Adults and Dislocated Workers who qualify for services under a variety of programs and funding streams administered by EKCEP. These funding sources may include: the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); a variety of National Emergency Grants (NEGs) from the U.S. Department of Labor; grants from other U.S. federal departments; grant partnerships with the Commonwealth of Kentucky; private foundation and/or trust grants; and other public or private funds. By submitting a proposal, the applicant assures the EKWIB that: (1) the applicant will provide appropriate Direct Workforce Services under any of EKCEP's current or future funding sources for the EKCEP-area counties the applicant proposes to serve, as requested by EKCEP; and (2) the applicant will work cooperatively and effectively with any entities that partner with EKCEP in grants that include Direct Workforce Services in the region the applicant proposes to serve.

2. Career Advisors' Role

EKCEP's service model for Direct Workforce Services in Eastern Kentucky is anchored by the career advisors employed by the contractors and their direct interaction with employers and job-seeking clients. In the contracts to be

awarded under this RFP, the two major elements of the role of the career advisors are to:

- Help employers find, recruit, prepare, and, when appropriate, train workers to fill the positions that their businesses need, in execution of the MOUs or other agreements that have been developed between employers and the workforce development system in response to the employers' identified workforce needs. In addition to working with clients already enrolled in Direct Workforce Services to meet these employers' needs, career advisors are also expected to conduct active outreach and recruiting in order to promote specific employment opportunities and recruit new clients as candidates for these opportunities. In order to ensure that there are no gaps in services, career advisors are expected to reach out to employers within their service counties that do business in the sectors of emphasis selected by the EKWIB and determine those employers' workforce needs. These employers' needs should be communicated to EKCEP's business services personnel, who will work collaboratively with those employers, the career advisors, community leaders, educational institutions, and other local partners to develop action plans and MOUs to meet those employers' needs.
- Help jobseekers find employment. The jobseekers that career advisors assist will include Dislocated Workers (individuals who have lost jobs) and Adults (including first-time workers who are entering the workforce and underemployed adults who are trying to improve their careers). Services to Dislocated Workers and Adults must involve a client-centered approach, the goal of which is to facilitate each client's preparation and strategic planning for the next phase of his/her career using whatever workforce development services and activities are needed.

For both categories of jobseekers (Dislocated Workers and Adults) career advisors will provide case management and job and career counseling throughout the client's active engagement of services, including after the client obtains a job. Career advisors may interact with clients via face-to-face meetings, video conferencing, phone conversation, or other technology assisted conversations. Because of the increasing emphasis on providing clients with remote access to services, career advisors must stay abreast of technological developments that allow clients to be determined eligible, enrolled, advised, and served remotely.

Career advisors must work closely with workforce partner agencies, educational institutions, other community organizations, and local governments to ensure that all potential clients are aware of the employment opportunities and workforce services available.

As a part of their involvement with career opportunities and alternatives for their clients, career advisors must maintain an awareness of local and regional employers, their workforce needs, and the plans contained in any agreements or MOUs to meet those needs.

3. Components of Direct Workforce Services

To provide Direct Workforce Services, successful bidders will need to provide the following components:

- a. **Required Staff** — The staff required to deliver Direct Workforce Services includes:
 - **Career Advisors** — The core position in the EKCEP service model is the career advisor. These staff will recruit, identify, and prepare candidates for the job opportunities identified in the MOUs and/or agreements with employers, and also will be the primary contact for job-seeking Adult and Dislocated Worker clients. Career advisors will provide the career advising, coaching, and case management services described in this request for proposals. Career advisors may work in EKCEP-provided workforce programs supported by a variety of funding sources.

Career advisors are the central component of the front line of the workforce development network. Career advisors will locate and recruit job-seeking clients; work with them to understand their circumstances, aptitudes, skills, interests, barriers, and career objectives and the ways these align with the needs identified by employers; and then use all of this information to refer those clients to the appropriate employers or place them into the services and/or training (where appropriate) that will prepare them for the identified job opportunities. Career advisors will connect clients with many of these services through knowledgeable referrals to partner agencies within the workforce development network. Even after referring clients to other service providers, career advisors are expected to stay in close touch with their clients and consistently be a part of each client's decision-making and problem solving.

A successful career advisor will build effective, trust-based relationships with clients that result in quality job placements in positions that meet area employers' demands. This will require maintaining current knowledge of the job opportunities, skill requirements, and other prerequisites identified by employers in and around their service area. It will also require nurturing ongoing, communicative partnerships with other entities within workforce development, training, and education. These attributes will become

the career advisor's "product" that he/she uses in personal outreach efforts to recruit new clients.

In addition to their work with individual job seekers, the career advisors are expected to reach out to employers within their service counties in order to determine those employers' workforce needs and help develop action plans to meet those needs. Career advisors' relationships with local employers will also help provide a basis for work-based learning placements, including internships with those employers. As a part of this employer focus, some career advisors will be encouraged to be members of the appropriate EKCEP Regional Employer Services Team and to participate in team activities.

If the organization that provides Direct Workforce Services chooses to offer Job Clubs in its service area, career advisors may also serve as Job Club facilitators. Job Club facilitators will be responsible for publicizing the local Job Club, recruiting attendees, arranging for employer engagement and participation, and facilitating the actual Job Club meetings. Job Clubs are expected to be focused upon specific job opportunities with area employers and in locally available career fields, in alignment with the workforce needs identified in the MOUs/agreements executed between the workforce system and employers. Job Clubs will involve the participation of these employers, as well as other community partners.

- **Workforce Management** — The successful bidder will need to employ and designate sufficient and qualified staff to manage, supervise, and oversee the activities and functions of the career advisors and other staff who provide the Direct Workforce Services contracted for under this RFP. Management and supervision of these staff and services will include: providing strategic guidance, planning, and leadership to staff in order to ensure that the needs of both sides of the workforce equation (jobseekers, employers) are being met; ensuring that performance and productivity goals are met; monitoring the quality of services provided; ensuring that proper records are kept; ensuring that EKCEP policies, federal regulations, and other relevant rules are adhered to; managing budgets; initiating and overseeing successful community outreach and education; and communicating and collaborating with EKCEP to ensure that the best possible results are achieved for their service area.
- **Other Staff (Optional)** — An organization providing Direct Workforce Services may be able to justify support staff to perform certain services to support the work of the career advisors and workforce management. EKCEP will consider the necessity of any of these support staff position when evaluating proposals. In the event

that EKCEP obtains additional funding sources for workforce services that require special competencies or certifications, the contractor(s) will need to employ staff holding those certifications or competencies in order to deliver those services.

EKCEP will provide technical assistance and training for any or all of these staff positions and activities to the successful bidders and their staff prior to contract execution (if needed) and on an ongoing basis throughout the contract, as needed. The staff of the successful bidder will be required to participate in these trainings and technical assistance activities. In some cases, bidder staff may be required to achieve specific levels of competencies prior to performing some aspects of these jobs.

- b. **Fiscal Services** — Organizations submitting proposals must be able to provide the fiscal services necessary to support the delivery of Direct Workforce Services. Fiscal services may include payments to clients or to vendors on behalf of clients for services such as training, payment of staff, and other necessary expenditures, using the accounting and bookkeeping procedures required to meet the appropriate federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars and funding-source regulations. EKCEP will provide the successful bidder with funding for direct training (such as tuition and On-the-Job Training wages) and intensive services (such as Internship wages) as needed, based on client activity and employer needs within the counties being served.
- c. **Service Delivery Capacity** — Organizations submitting proposals are expected to have or to be able to acquire the capacity to effectively deliver Direct Workforce Services to the population of the counties they propose to serve. Service delivery capacity may include either physical facilities that allow services to be delivered in person, or virtual facilities (e.g., computers, connectivity, software, etc.) that allow services to be delivered remotely.

All responding organizations must be able to provide services virtually. Respondents that propose to serve multiple counties may be required to provide services virtually in less populated counties, with limited or no provision of WIOA-funded physical office locations. The determination of locations to be served by physical offices will be made based upon the location or partner programs, historical service data, and other efficiency considerations.

Where physical facilities are provided, they should include adequate offices and meeting room space for the delivery of in-person career advisor services and client activities. Such physical facilities should be located in or near the population centers of the area to be served in order to provide reasonable convenience and accessibility to workforce

services, but are not required in every county to be served. All physical facilities providing workforce services within the EKCEP local workforce area must comply with all requirements for handicapped accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The physical facilities from which the Direct Workforce Services are provided may include:

- An applicant-hosted Full-Service Career Center.*
- A partner-hosted Full-Service Career Center.*
- An applicant-hosted Affiliate Career Center.**
- A partner-hosted Affiliate Career Center.**
- An applicant-hosted Workforce Services Office*** associated with Eastern Kentucky's career center network.

** **Full-Service Career Center** — A Full-Service Career Center is a workforce center that has been so designated by the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB) after meeting criteria established by the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the EKWIB, and completing the application and certification process. As of the date of this RFP, there are two Full-Service Career Centers in the EKCEP local area: the Kentucky Career Center JobSight at 412 Roy Campbell Drive, Hazard, KY, and the Kentucky Career Center JobSight at 686 North Lake Drive, Prestonsburg, KY.*

*** **Affiliate Career Center** — An Affiliate Career Center can be any location where two or more of the five core partner agencies (Office of Employment and Training, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Office for the Blind, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Title IB, and Adult Education) in the Kentucky Career Center (KCC) network in Eastern Kentucky provide services and maintain a regular schedule during operating hours.*

**** **Workforce Services Office** — Under this procurement, a Workforce Services Office is any location that provides the services of a partner agency associated with the Kentucky Career Center (KCC) network in Eastern Kentucky and collaborates with other non-located KCC network agencies.*

Virtual facilities will be used to increase the accessibility of Direct Workforce Services in the counties to be served by the responding organization, especially in less populated counties. The responding organization must have both the capacity to deliver services remotely and the commitment to implement remote service delivery to accommodate clients who don't reside near physical locations and

clients who prefer that mode of services. In addition to having the required equipment, connectivity, and knowledge, the Direct Workforce Services provider must embrace virtual services as an integral part of the service model, including using social media platforms as a large part of outreach and recruiting of customers.

4. Funding for Contractors' Activities

EKCEP will fund contractors' activities under three general categories:

- a. **Infrastructure** — This category includes the costs of providing the fiscal services, physical facilities, and virtual capacity described above in sections II.A.3.b. "Fiscal Services," and II.A.3.c. "Service Delivery Capacity" (and possibly including some of the "Other Staff" mentioned in the last item in section II.A.3 "Required Staff"). These may be generally characterized as "overhead" costs, including the kinds of costs that comprise an indirect rate. Proposals must include a detailed budget statement itemizing these costs for the full year. In evaluating the proposed infrastructure budgets, EKCEP will consider the population of the service area and the potential for return on investment as factors in determining the amount to be funded within each contract awarded.
- b. **Staff Providing Direct Services to Job-Seeking Clients or Employers** — This category includes the costs of providing the career advisors, Job Club facilitators, and workforce management described above in section II.A.3.a. "Required Staff." Proposals must include a detailed budget statement itemizing these staff costs for the full year. In evaluating staff budgets proposed, EKCEP will consider the population of the service area and the potential for return on investment as factors in determining the number of staff to be funded within each contract awarded.
- c. **Client Services** — This category includes the funds to support client services allowed by local policy (such as internships, paid work experience, on-the-job training, tuition, supportive services, etc.). The total of these funds will **not** be a part of the contract. EKCEP will provide these funds to the contractor throughout the year, based upon caseload, actual services and activities, employer needs within the region, and funding availability.

5. Outcomes and Performance Requirements

EKCEP's performance is measured against the goals, objectives, and standards attached to each funding stream that it administers. The EKCEP service model is designed to provide activities and services that will achieve these goals and objectives, and meet these standards. The overarching objectives of all of EKCEP's programs are to prepare and place the region's workers in jobs that provide a wage that makes them self-sufficient, and to

build the region's economy by ensuring that the region's employers — whether existing or new — are able to hire qualified workers that help their businesses succeed.

Similarly, the performance of successful responders to this RFP will be measured against the goals, objectives, and performance standards attached to each funding stream that supports client services and activities that they will deliver under the contract. The specific levels of performance that will be deemed as successful will be discussed and identified during the contract negotiations that precede the final contract awards.

The performance measures for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs supported by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds can be found in Sections 116(2)(A)(i) and (iii) of the WIOA. The performance measures for the Youth programs supported by WIOA can be found in Sections 116(2)(A)(ii) and (iii) of the WIOA. The full text of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is available online at: <http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/docs/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>

As mandated by WIOA, EKCEP annually negotiates its acceptable levels of performance against these measures. Contractors will be expected to meet or exceed these negotiated levels of performance.

6. Special Circumstances in the Promise Zone

Seven counties within the EKCEP local workforce area (and part of one county outside of EKCEP's service area) were designated as a Promise Zone on January 7, 2014, by President Barack Obama. (The EKCEP counties are Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, and Perry. The non-EKCEP area included is a portion of Whitley County.) This designation as the first and, at that time only, rural Promise Zone in the nation gives the region preference in obtaining grant funds under several departments, and helps the communities involved engage in a collaborative and comprehensive effort to improve the overall quality of life in the region. Responders to this procurement who seek to provide workforce services in any of EKCEP's Promise Zone counties should be aware that the preferential status conferred by the Promise Zone designation makes it likely that EKCEP or its partners in education, training, and workforce services will acquire other grants in the near future. It will be a condition of EKCEP's contracts that the winning bidders agree to collaborate with, participate in, and deliver workforce services under any additional grants that come into the Promise Zone during the term of the contract.

B. One-Stop Operator

WIOA establishes the position of One-Stop Operator (Section 121[D]) and allows local workforce areas a great deal of latitude in defining the specific functions of this position. In the Eastern Kentucky local workforce area, the functions of the One-Stop Operator are to:

- Coordinate the delivery of services of participating one-stop partners and service providers in the county where a full-service career center (i.e., one-stop center) is located and in any surrounding counties that the One-Stop Operator serves. (In addition to the Direct Workforce Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers funded under Title I-B of WIOA and awarded under this RFP, the one-stop partners in any county include, but are not limited to: Youth Program services funded under Title I-B of WIOA, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Career and Technical Education, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans Services, and employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act.) This coordination of services may involve multiple offices and/or service outlets, including a certified full-service career center or affiliate career center, if such exist within the One-Stop Operator's service area.
- Foster a culture of collaboration and excellent customer service among one-stop partners that promotes delivery of the innovative, high quality workforce development services to all customers of the workforce development system, including employers, adults, dislocated workers, youth. The One-Stop Operator must convene and lead regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., monthly, quarterly) of the one-stop partners to build this collaborative culture, improve service delivery, and evaluate progress toward shared goals.
- Serve as a resource for staff of all partner agencies in regard to the objectives, processes, requirements, and regulations of WIOA and the workforce services delivery system.
- Provide support, assistance, and resolution to all staff in response to collaboration issues, facilities needs, or other problems.
- Provide direction for the team leads of the partners and function-based groups.
- Ensure that comprehensive cross-training and development plans are established for the staff of partners present in the area to be served.
- Measure customer satisfaction with the workforce delivery system in your service area.
- Lead the establishment of performance goals for the workforce services network in the One-Stop Operator's service area, and track and evaluate performance in pursuit of those goals.

If and when appropriate, the One-Stop Operator will also be required to participate in the Kentucky Career Center certification process for any locations within its service area that choose to apply for certification as a full-service career center or affiliate career center.

Additionally, if the Governor chooses to so require, the one-stop operator must also collect specific performance information from providers of on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, paid or unpaid work experience opportunities, and transitional employment; and use the information to determine whether the providers meet the performance criteria required by the Governor.

In coordinating local services, the one-stop operator must not establish practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term services, such as intensive employment, training, and education services.

EKCEP will prefer to contract with an entity that is knowledgeable about workforce development services, their objectives, and the regulations that govern them, including:

- Career services (described in WIOA Section 134(c)(2)).
- Training services (described in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)).
- Employment and training activities carried out under WIOA Section 134(d), if any.
- Programs and activities carried out by one-stop partners, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, postsecondary education, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans Services.
- Data, labor market information, and analysis from Wagner-Peyser (described in Section 15(a) of the Wagner-Peyser Act).
- Labor exchange services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

Entities that apply should possess and have demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Competent management skills.
- Commitment to excellent customer service.
- Cooperative culture among management and staff.
- Commitment to the integrated service delivery model.
- Willingness to partner with others.
- Flexibility and ability to adapt to change.

An entity that applies to be a One-Stop Operator in the EKCEP service area must disclose in its application any potential conflicts of interest that could arise from

its relationship(s) with particular training service providers or other service providers, including, but not limited to, other Direct Workforce Services providers.

The Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board will oversee and evaluate the performance of the entity or entities selected as the one-stop operator(s) for the local area.

III. General Procurement Terms and Information

A. Procurement Term

The initial period of contract performance will be July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Funding will be provided on an annual basis. EKCEP, Inc. reserves the option to extend this contract for three additional years, based on the availability of funds, contract performance, and the workforce needs of EKCEP and the region.

EKCEP reserves the option to use this procurement to add or increase workforce services within the region if additional funding for related workforce services becomes available and it is in the best interest of the region and EKCEP to do so.

B. Procurement Timeline

This RFP will be available from the EKCEP, Inc. website at www.ekcep.org, beginning April 9, 2021. The timetable for this procurement process is:

- RFP Release: April 9, 2021.
- Bidder's Conference (Virtual): April 16, 2021.
- Proposals Due: May 7, 2021.
- Evaluation of Proposals: May 7, 2021 — May 21, 2021.
- Recommendations and Negotiation of Contracts: May 24 — June 4, 2021.
- Staff Recommendation of Contracts: June 4, 2021.
- WIB Approval of Contracts: June 10, 2021.
- Contract Implementation: July 1, 2021.

C. Bidders Conference

An optional bidders conference will be held virtually at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on April 16, 2021. Potential bidders must notify EKCEP of their interest in participating in the bidders conference via email (rfp@ekcep.org) by 5:00 p.m. EDT on April 14, 2021. EKCEP will send these potential bidders a link that will allow them to join the bidders conference.

The virtual bidders conference will address bidders' questions about either of the two roles sought by the RFP: Direct Workforce Services Provider and One-Stop Operator. The virtual bidders conference will end no later than 4:00 p.m. EDT, but may end earlier if questions are exhausted. Bidders are not required to attend the conference and failure to attend will not affect the score of a bidder's proposal.

Questions from prospective bidders may be submitted at any time before the due date to: rfp@EKCEP.org. Questions and answers that provide significant

clarification of the intent of the RFP, the services requested by the RFP, or other factors affecting proposals will be posted on the EKCEP website at www.ekcep.org/rfp.

D. Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

Each proposal will be evaluated by EKCEP's Review Team based upon the bidder's:

- Responsiveness to the information requested and format prescribed in this RFP.
- Demonstrated ability to provide the fiscal and administrative capacity to support EKCEP's service delivery model.
- Cost reasonableness.
- Innovation and creativity in developing strategies to address the challenges identified in the narrative questions.
- Creativity and eagerness to reach out to new customers and partners for workforce development services.
- Demonstrated capacity to work proactively and effectively within the communities they serve, including consideration for a history of successful collaboration and outreach with partner agencies and employers.
- Demonstrated understanding of the economic and workforce needs of the community.

Full or partial points will be awarded for the response to each narrative question according to the amounts noted in Section IV.B.3., below.

The budgets provided in response to Section IV.B.4 below will also be evaluated by the Review Team, with an emphasis on appropriate proportion of line items in relation to the services and initiatives identified in the proposal's narrative. Proposed budgets are not final and may be adjusted through negotiation with the bidder after a proposal is conditionally approved by the Review Team.

E. Workforce Innovation Board Action

EKCEP, Inc. staff will make recommendations for which proposals to accept to the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (EKWIB). The final selection of awardees will be made by the EKWIB.

F. Right to Cancel and Negotiate

EKCEP, Inc. reserves the right to delay, amend, reissue, or cancel all or any part of this RFP at any time without prior notice.

This RFP does not commit EKCEP to accept any proposal and EKCEP will not be responsible for any costs incurred by a bidder in the preparation of responses to this RFP.

EKCEP reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to accept or reject any or all items in any proposal, and to award contracts in whole or in part as is deemed to be in the best interest of EKCEP, Inc. EKCEP, Inc. reserves the right to negotiate with any bidder after proposals are reviewed.

EKCEP, Inc. reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of the contract with successful bidders.

IV. Proposal Submission Instructions and Content Requirements

A. Submission Instructions

EKCEP, Inc. must receive proposals no later than May 7, 2021 COB. Bidders may submit five hard copies or one electronic copy of their proposal. If hard copies are submitted, they should be sent to:

EKCEP, Inc.
Attn: Sharon Poff
412 Roy Campbell Drive, Suite 100
Hazard, Kentucky 41701

The electronic copy should be emailed to: RFP@EKCEP.org

B. Content Requirements

The proposal should consist of the following information in this prescribed order. (Number and letter each section of your answer appropriately.):

1. Proposal Cover and Affirmations Form

Complete the Proposal Cover and Affirmations Form (see Appendix 1).

2. Executive Summary

Give a brief description of the bidding organization's mission and history. Include how the EKCEP, Inc. service model and goals for the workforce system in Eastern Kentucky fit with the organization's mission. (This summary **may not exceed 1 page**, single-spaced.)

3. Narrative

Answer all the questions (i through xv) in Section 3.a. if your organization is proposing to provide Direct Workforce Services. Answer all the questions (i through ix) in Section 3.b. below ***only if*** your organization is also proposing to provide One-Stop Operator Services in a county which currently includes a full-service one-stop career center (i.e., Floyd, Perry).

a. Narrative — Questions Regarding Provision of Direct Workforce Services (240 total points possible)

Please keep your answers under 750 words per question.

- i. Provide a description and brief history of your organization, including the organization's mission and vision for its service region. (10 points)

- ii. List the county (or counties) where you propose to provide Direct Workforce Services and describe the needs of job seekers in that area. (15 points)
- iii. Identify the specific physical service locations (Full-Service Career Center[s], Affiliate Career Center[s], and/or Workforce Services Office[s]) from which you propose to provide services to the counties you would serve. Indicate which of these locations are fully-staffed, full-time “anchor” locations and which are satellite locations in lower-population areas that could be served through intermittent staffing or entirely through virtual services. Identify the number of career advisors to be stationed at each location and list their qualifications and credentials. Include all credentials that specifically address the skills and competencies needed to perform the work of a career advisor. (30 points)
- iv. Explain how your organization will use virtual (remote) services to enroll and serve clients, in order to increase clients’ access to services and, where appropriate, reduce the need for physical office locations and in-person service delivery. (20 points)
- v. For each service location where your organization will maintain a staff presence and provide services to clients, list all other services that are provided from this location, including those provided by partner agencies. (5 points)
- vi. Provide a description of any non-EKCEP-funded staff in any of your locations who will be leveraged to provide support to workforce development activities. (5 points)
- vii. Describe how the career advisors in your organization and the services they provide will produce a lasting impact on the needs of both the job seekers and employers in your service area. (20 points)
- viii. Describe the workforce needs of the employers in your service area. (30 points)
- ix. Describe the strategies your organization will implement that will provide innovative solutions to employers’ workforce concerns. (15 points)
- x. Describe how the Direct Workforce Services you will provide through this contract will work collaboratively with education and economic development to support the economic development goals of the community. (15 points)

- xi. Describe the ways in which your organization will leverage its connections to community resources and local organizations to comprehensively serve job seekers and employers. (15 points)
- xii. Explain your organization’s plans for reaching out to and recruiting new job-seeking clients to meet the needs of area employers as identified in memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or other agreements between employers and the workforce development system. Discuss social media and other specific message vehicles and activities you will use, as well as the expertise of the specific staff members who will be responsible for initiating and following through on these activities. Please include any specific and innovative outreach opportunities that exist in your community. (15 points)
- xiii. Describe the strategies your organization will implement that will result in a greater level of outreach to dislocated workers? Include social media strategies. (15 points)
- xiv. Describe the strategies your organization will implement to support EKCEP’s efforts to promote home-based job opportunities working for remote employers (i.e., telework). (15 points)
- xv. Providing training in high-demand sectors and emerging careers is a priority of the Eastern Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board, which will target its training funds almost exclusively to supporting training in these priority sectors and supporting the development of career pathways in these sectors. Describe how your Direct Workforce Services will identify and recruit the best candidates for these trainings, including those who are advancing within career pathways. (15 points)

NOTE: Demand sectors in Eastern Kentucky include: **healthcare** (which includes health information management, medical coding, registered nursing, etc.); **skilled trades; manufacturing; energy** (which includes electrical lineman, fiber optic linemen, solar, etc.); and **business services** (which includes IT, computer coding, programming, cyber security, telework for remote employers, accounting, bookkeeping, etc.).

- b. **Narrative — Questions Regarding Provision of One-Stop Operator Services (110 total points possible)** Answer the questions below (i through ix) **only if** your organization is also proposing to provide One-Stop Operator Services in a county which currently includes a full-service

one-stop career center (i.e., Floyd, Perry). If your organization is not proposing to provide One-Stop Operator Services, you may mark this section as “N/A” on your submission.

Please keep your answers under 750 words per question.

- i. Identify the county (or counties) in which you propose to serve as One-Stop Operator, and the specific location of the full-service one-stop career center that serves those counties. (5 points)
- ii. Are you currently the leasee, owner, or tenant of a facility or facilities in the county (or counties) where you would serve as One-Stop Operator? If so, identify those facilities; if not, explain your plan for acquiring or otherwise establishing such facilities. (Include each of the counties identified in question i above.) (5 points)
- iii. Describe your organization’s experience managing multi-agency workforce centers or other multi-agency collaborative ventures. (15 points)
- iv. Describe your commitment to an integrated service delivery model and your plan for integrating the services of all required workforce partners and other partners in the counties you would serve. (15 points)
- v. Explain the depth of your organization’s knowledge and experience with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). (15 points)
- vi. Explain how your organization will measure the customer satisfaction level with the full-service one-stop career center and with the workforce delivery system in general in your service area. (10 points)
- vii. Describe how your organization will track and evaluate performance goals for the workforce services network. (5 points)
- viii. Describe how your organization will perform the responsibilities described in Section II.B. of this RPF, including: (a) how they will ensure all partner agencies are collaborating and cooperating in the delivery of comprehensive workforce services; (b) how your organization will train One-Stop Operator staff; (c) how you will foster cross-training for the staff of partner programs. (15 points)

- ix. Describe your organization's customer service experience and your process for handling complaints and/or concerns from customers. (10 points)

4. Budget

Please answer the questions below:

- a. Provide a detailed line-item budget of expenses for the **infrastructure** (i.e., facilities, equipment, accounting, maintenance etc.) required to deliver **Direct Workforce Services** for one year (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022) for each location where services will be provided.
- b. Provide a detailed budget for **staff** (i.e., salaries, fringe benefits, travel) to deliver **Direct Workforce Services** for one year (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022).
- c. Provide a budget for the delivery of **One-Stop Operator Services** for one year (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022), in a total amount not to exceed \$10,000 per full-service one-stop workforce center that you intend to serve.

5. Organizational Documentation

To be considered, bidders must also submit the following organizational documentation:

- An organizational chart covering all positions
- Two (2) years of audited financial history.
- A report on the status of any costs that have been disallowed by any state and/or federal agency within the past three (3) years.

Failure to submit this documentation will disqualify a proposing organization from consideration.

C. Supporting Documentation

Bidders recommended for a contract will be required to submit supporting documentation for each budget line item during contract negotiation.

Applicable support documentation may include:

- Current lease agreements
- Personnel policies
- A copy of your current federally approved Indirect Cost Rate approval letter.

NOTE: Please **do not** submit these items with your initial proposal. This documentation will be examined **only** for bidders whose proposal is recommended for a contract.

V. Appendices

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

References Page 27

APPENDIX 1

Proposal Cover and Affirmations Form

Please copy, complete, and sign the cover and affirmations form that appears on the following page.
Use the completed form as the first page of your proposal.

**Proposal to Deliver Workforce Services to Adults, Dislocated Workers,
and Youth, and Provide Business Services to Employers
and/or to
Serve as a One-Stop Operator in the Kentucky Career Center Network
in the Eastern Kentucky C.E.P. Local Workforce Area**

During Program Year 2021-22 (July 1, 2021—June 30, 2022)

Full Name of Proposing Organization:			
Full Mailing Address (Street, City, State, ZIP):			
Proposing to Provide: <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Workforce Services <input type="checkbox"/> One-Stop Operator Services			
Organization Type (non-profit, for-profit, LLC, etc.):	DUNS Number:	Year Established:	Phone Numbers (include area code):
Contact Persons			
Name:		Title:	
<p><u>AFFIRMATIONS:</u> The person signing below affirms that he/she is authorized to submit this proposal on behalf of the proposing entity. The person signing below further affirms that the proposing entity is capable of performing the services (including fiscal management and information tracking and reporting) as described in the attached proposal and agrees to EKCEP Workforce Innovation Board’s terms of service as described in the Request for Proposals to which this proposal responds.</p>			
Signature:			Date:
Printed Name:		Title:	

APPENDIX 2

REFERENCES

EKCEP: www.ekcep.org
www.jobsight.org

WIOA Overview: <http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm>

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):
<http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/docs/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf>

WIOA Rules - [https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/Final Rules Resources.cfm](https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/Final_Rules_Resources.cfm)
This site also includes links to many other resources regarding WIOA operation and implementation, including reference guides, overview documents, and frequently asked questions.

WIOA Fact Sheet: One-Stop Career Centers:
http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Docs/WIOA_OneStop_FactSheet.pdf

Training and Employment Guidance Letters: <https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/>

Kentucky Career Center (KCC) website: <http://kcc.ky.gov/>

KCC Certification – FAQ:
<http://www.kwib.ky.gov/ImplementationStatus/careercentercertification/CCCFAQ102014.pdf>

KCC Certification Information: <http://www.kwib.ky.gov/careercentercertification.htm>

KCC Partner for Success: <http://www.kwib.ky.gov/partnersuccess.htm>

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board – WORKSmart Kentucky Strategic Plan:
<http://www.kwib.ky.gov/documents/WORKSmart2013.pdf>

Kentucky Skills Network – (Business Services):
<http://www.thinkkentucky.com/workforce/>

Kentucky State Plan 2012 – 2017:
<http://kwib.ky.gov/documents/UNIFIEDSTATEPLAN0113.pdf>