

Questions and Answers
Career Pathways Grant Opportunity
Westchester Workforce Funders Collaborative
February 6, 2020

Q: I heard the phrase “workforce systems”. Are One Stop system partners required for this grant?

A: No, One Stop system partners are not required for this grant.

Q: There are 4 industries highlighted in the grant as required elements for the proposal. What if you are training for an occupation (ex. Accounting or Marketing) that is cross sector, but the jobseeker will be placed in one of the targeted industries?

A: The grant focused on the sector/industry, not the specific occupation. The competitive grants will be reviewed based on meeting the required elements as outlined in the RFP.

Q: Are you anticipating that proposals be targeting one of the four sectors specifically?

A: We seek strong proposals validated by data. All proposals will be measured based on the merit of information included. All targeted areas of the proposal should be backed up with information to support the strategy outlined in the proposal.

Q: Can the industry partner be a not-for-profit?

A: All proposals should adhere to the required elements of the grant.

Q: In their review of proposals, will the collaborative be emphasizing the number of people served or the quality of the experience?

A: Proposals, overall, will be measured on the basis of the entirety of the program plan and proposed outcomes. The quality of the experience is important. All proposal areas should be narrated in a credible and realistic manner.

Q: What defines vulnerable populations?

A: Vulnerable populations are any populations with barriers to employment, are economically vulnerable; chronic unemployed, homelessness, young adults are some examples of vulnerable populations.

Q: Who is Perch? Who is in the Funders Collaborative? Who makes the funding decisions? Where is the money coming from?

A: Perch Advisors is the technical assistance provider to the Westchester Workforce Funders Collaborative. The Funders Collaborative is a group of funders that came together to address larger system change issues in workforce development programming. The Funders include: JPMChase, Westchester Community Foundation, CIT, MVP Health, WMC Health, and the Patrino Foundation. All members have invested funds for this first year of funding. Every member of the collaborative will get a vote in the decision making of which proposals to fund.

Q: Are there a minimum number of board members needed to apply, or a minimum budget?
A: No, but if you have a board with fewer than 5 members, or a small budget, please consider your organization's capacity to carry out the rigor required for the grant.

Q: Is there a way for people in the room (at info sessions) to collaborate?
A: Yes, there is time after the info session for individuals to meet and network. In addition, the full list of info session attendees will be shared with all in attendance.

Q: Our goal is paid work based learning - how do we fit in?
A: This is a competitive grant process, and while work based learning is a required element, competitive proposals will meet all required elements as outlined in the RFP.

Q: In the RFP it states that projects should serve residents of Westchester and Putnam Counties. Is it serving both, or either or.
A: Westchester and/or Putnam counties are both included in the grant.

Q: Is there a required dollar match?
A: No, but as this is a competitive grant process, the strength of the budget will be taken into account when reviewing proposals.

Q: Is there an expectation of project sustainability or an additional grant renewal year?
A: Since this is the first year that the Westchester Workforce Funders Collaborative will be making grants, there is no current plan for renewable funding or funding for a second year.

Q: Can you share the contacts from the info sessions?
A: Yes, a full list of attendees with their contact will be shared to anyone attending the info sessions.

Q: Will the slides from the info session be posted online?
A: Yes, the slides are available at www.wcf-ny.org.

Q: Are the grants intended to be for a 12 month period?
A: Grants are between 12 - 18 months, not to exceed 18 months from the start of the contracting period. Grants should be treated as non-renewable grants.

Q: What is the decision timeline?
A: It is anticipated that the selection of grantees and discussions around contracting will take place in April of 2020. The start period of the grant should be within 3 months of the contract start date. Projects can take up to 6 months to prepare for their program launch.

Q: Will questions be accepted after the dates of the info session?

A: Questions will be accepted via email to tseeley@wcf-ny.org until February 7, 2020. All questions will be posted to www.wcf-ny.org on or about February 10, 2020.

Q: What is considered a strong proposal?

A: Strong proposals address all goals and elements as outlined in the RFP, validated with information to support the required elements.

Q: We see that funds for the program proposals should be directed at Westchester and Putnam residents, however, we serve a population that sometimes come from outside those two counties. Can we apply?

A: In your proposal response, please state carefully how you will specifically serve, measure, and track the outcomes of only Westchester and Putnam residents.

Q: We have 500 employees and are a not-for-profit. Could we be considered an employer for the focus of this grant?

A: We know how hard it is to attract and retain talent in the not-for-profit sector, however, the focus of this grant opportunity are the four sectors outlined in the RFP.

Q: Can you share the history of the Workforce Funders Collaborative and the long term vision of the group?

A: In many regions of the country there are funders collaboratives - groups that include philanthropy, employers, service agencies - seeking to solve the critical need of skill shortages while addressing economic mobility for jobseekers. This collaborative came together because they were all passionate about addressing the skill shortages in Westchester and Putnam counties, and supporting local residents to gain critical skills that match the current and future demand of employers. We seek to address both the supply and demand side of the workforce equation. The vision is to address this within our region by bringing both demand and supply side partners together to address these issues.

Q: My organization is a current grantee of WCF. Are we able to apply for the workforce development fund for our currently funded program?

A: Any nonprofit may apply. Your organization's status as a grantee of WCF does not impact its ability to submit an application and be considered.

The Career Pathways Grant proposals will be reviewed by the funding partners who will make funding decisions as a team. All proposals will be evaluated based on criteria laid out in the RFP.

Q: Is the County eligible to apply? Since we are public, I imagine we are. However, the language below does not state government entities, which would include Youth Bureaus.

A: Yes, a unit of government may apply and your question underscores that our language was not as clear as it should have been.

I will make sure that at the public information session and on the FAQ we clarify.

Q. Will there be future grant cycles for this opportunity?

A. The Westchester Workforce Funders Collaborative has not yet determined timelines or priorities for future opportunities.

Q. Would you consider a small request (\$10-20K) to develop a program and the collaborations it will require? I have an idea for a new program but cannot develop the necessary collaborations before the proposal due date.

A. Yes, you are welcome to submit a request for a planning grant in the amount of \$10,000-\$20,000.

Q: As an employer, we are very interested in this grant opportunity and are looking for opportunities to partner with other organizations on grant applications. Is there an issue with us being part of multiple applications?

A: Each proposal will be evaluated on its own merits. If an employer is participating as a partner on more than one proposal, it will be important for each proposal to be very clear about partners' roles and the capacity of each partner to meet the deliverables.