

Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

for

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Title I One-Stop Operator**

Period: October 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025

With option to renew two additional years through June 30, 2027

Release Date: August 10, 2023

*Proposals Due: September 11, 2023, by 3:00 p.m. central
to malaw528@aol.com*

Purpose and Background

Mid-Carolina Regional Council (MCRC), as grant recipient and the administrative unit for the Mid-Carolina Local Workforce Area, is soliciting proposals on behalf of the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board from qualified organizations interested in serving as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I One-Stop Operator in the North Carolina counties of Cumberland, Moore, and Sampson. The Mid-Carolina Local Workforce Area is designed to provide a full range of services and assistance opportunities to job seekers, youth, and employers.

This Request for Proposal was prepared based upon the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) and associated U.S. Department of Labor Regulations and guidance. This Federal Law was implemented to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States. WIOA provides the framework for a national workforce preparation system that is flexible, responsive, customer-focused, and locally managed. Mandatory core program partners include Adult/ Dislocated Worker/Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation, along with required partners specified in the Act.

Offerors are strongly encouraged to read Training and Employment Guidance Letter 04-15 issued by the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines the vision for the One-Stop system under WIOA.

The three hallmarks of WIOA include:

1. The needs of businesses and workers drive workforce solutions, and local boards are accountable for this within the communities they serve.
2. One-Stop Centers provide excellent customer-centric services and focus on continuous improvement; and,
3. The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

WIOA is built around the following key principles:

- Increase access and opportunity, particularly for those individuals with barriers to employment, to ensure success in the labor market.
- Support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system.
- Improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages, and to provide employers with the skilled workers they need to succeed in a global economy.

- Promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services to better address the employment and skill needs of workers, jobseekers, and employers.
- Increase the prosperity of workers and employers and the economic growth of communities, regions, and states, and the global competitiveness of the United States.
- Provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants.

Any contract resulting from this Request for Proposal (RFP) is anticipated to begin October 1, 2023, and end June 30, 2025, and may be extended for two additional years (as one-year agreements) at the discretion of MCRC and the MCWDB. Contracts will be cost reimbursable (any proposed profit must be negotiated with MCRC and the MCWDB) and any option for extension will be executed in consideration of funding availability, satisfactory subrecipient performance, and other factors. Once a contract has been awarded, MCRC and the MCWDB reserves the right to modify delivery design, including infusing funds from alternate sources, at any time in order to meet the needs of the workforce system and local area. MCRC and the MCWDB also reserves the right to de-obligate funds from subrecipients who fail to meet performance standards and/or expenditure requirements or in the event of a recession of federal funds.

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and supportive services in order to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA strengthens the workforce development system and reaffirms the role of the NCWorks Career Center system, the cornerstone of the public workforce investment system. The vision for the NCWorks Career Centers is that all customers of the system will be served by staff organized by functions, rather than program or funding source, through a customer-focused, skilled-based, integrated service delivery strategy within the service area.

The Career Center system will provide integrated services to better serve internal and external customers, both individuals and employers. This system will feature an integrated customer flow that responds to customer need(s), fulfilled by cross-trained teams, with functional and formal leadership funded by both WIOA Title I (Youth, Young Adult, Adult, and Dislocated Worker funding) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser), and other partners, as appropriate.

The continuous evolution of the Career Center system to an integrated service delivery model enhances the movement toward a seamless united approach and emphasizes the need for and support of partner collaboration across the service area. Under this model, MCRC staff, WIOA Title I contract staff, DWS personnel, and partner representatives will integrate their staff from program specific organizations to an integrated services approach. All local Career Center staff and partner staff will be integrated into functional units, not separated by program or funding stream. While WIOA Title I and Title III funded staff are the foundation of this approach to service delivery, other partners and programs are

needed and encouraged to participate in the staffing, as well as to the success of the Career Center.

All Career Center team members (including, but not limited to, WIOA Title I and Title III funded positions) and partner staff will work together to implement an integrated customer flow designed to respond to customer needs in addition to program requirements. Staff-assisted services will be emphasized, and Center services will be continually promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved. The Career Center customer flow of services will include four major functions: welcome, skill development, employment, and business services.

Using local and regional labor market information, the Center will design and provide services to meet the needs of employer and jobseeker customers. All Career Center customers will be provided with the opportunity to assess their skills, improve their skills, and obtain the best career possible with their skills. The goal is that all job seekers that enter the Career Center will leave as better career candidates because of the value-added services received. Career Center staff and partners will develop a system where customers move easily within the labor market, while continuing to further their education and training over a lifetime to advance in their careers. The Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board supports stackable credentials and a career pathways model to achieve positions that pay a living wage.

The Career Center customer flow will include an initial skills assessment, access to a wide range of skill development services, and/or options to improve their employment opportunities through skill upgrading, skill validation, and credentialing. The Career Center will provide a wide range of short-term skill development opportunities through multiple service delivery methods. All services in this robust "product box" will be available to Center customers, embedded in an integrated customer flow, and easily accessed by all customers with the support of Center staff.

Mid-Carolina Local Workforce Area

The Mid-Carolina Local Workforce Area was created and formed in July 2022 by strategic partnerships and long-term planning and discussion by leadership in each of the respective North Carolina counties of Cumberland, Harnett, and Sampson. The Local Workforce Area added Montgomery and Moore counties in July of 2023. A program built around partnerships, teamwork, and collaboration has been the mantra for the years of planning and development leading up to the current geographic area. The Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board wants providers and the One-Stop Operator to meet people and businesses "where they are" and build from there.

In Section 107 of the legislation and in § 678.605 of WIOA Regulations Local Workforce Boards are required to competitively procure the One-Stop Operator role and responsibilities. The Board has contracted with an independent consultant to solicit and evaluate and recommend a One-Stop Operator to the Chief Elected Officials, the Workforce Development Board, and the Mid-Carolina Regional Council. § 678.615 says that firewalls must be in place to ensure that the competition is free of conflict of interest. Through this independent process, the Mid-Carolina Local Workforce Area is seeking proposals to

identify a single One-Stop Operator for Cumberland, Moore, and Sampson Counties.

For more information on the Mid-Carolina Local Workforce Area see:

<https://mccog.org/workforce-development.asp>

Resource Information

Potential Offerors may get helpful background information from the Local Workforce Board website at <https://mccog.org/workforce-development.asp>

The United States Department of Labor has a WIOA Online Community of Practice that provides information sharing needed to implement and maintain WIOA at:

<http://on.workforcegps.org>.

WIOA law and regulations can be found at: www.doleta.gov/wioa/

Request for Proposal Timeline

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| 08/10/23 | Request for Proposal Released and Posted on the Mid-Carolina Local Workforce Board website https://mccog.org/workforce-development.asp and on the National Association of Workforce Professionals website https://nawdp.org and published in three newspapers. |
| 08/15/23 | Deadline for Questions Due by 3:00 p.m. Central Time to Mary Ann Lawrence at malaw528@aol.com . Clearly put in the reference box: Questions for Mid-Carolina OSO Request for Proposal |
| 08/19/23 | Questions and Answers Released and posted on Local Board website https://mccog.org/workforce-development.asp . Questions and answers also available on www.nawdp.org and by emailing malaw528@aol.com . |
| 09/11/23 | Proposals Due Electronically by 3:00 p.m. Central Time to Mary Ann Lawrence at malaw528@aol.com . Clearly put in the reference box:
Proposal for Mid-Carolina OSO |
| 09/14/23 | Recommendation for Award to Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board |
| 09/19/23 | Evaluation and Award Announcement |
| 09/24/23 | One- Agreement Completed |
| 10/01/23 | New Contract for OSO Begins |

Technical Details

Any contract resulting from this Request for Proposal (RFP) is anticipated to begin October 1, 2023, and end June 30, 2025, and may be extended for two additional years (as one-year agreements) at the discretion of MCRC and the MCWDB.

The Successful Offeror will be required to agree to the contract and/or agreement **General Terms and Conditions**, have all controls securely in place, and agree to comply with any policies created by the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board and any applicable Federal or State policies, regulations, or laws. The Successful Offeror to this request for proposal may be expected to participate in contract negotiations to establish the exact services to be provided and the costs of those services if a proposal needs clarification. The final negotiated proposal narrative and budget schedule will constitute the Statement of Work for the contract and/or agreement. Applicants are advised that most documents in the possession of the consultant, and upon completion the Board Administration, are considered public records and subject to disclosure under North Carolina Public Records Law.

This request for proposal does not commit the Mid-Carolina Regional Council, Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board or Chief Elected Officials Board to direct the award of a final contract and/or agreement and will not pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal to this request. The Board reserves the right to request additional data, discussion, or presentation in support of written proposals. The Board may reject any or all proposals received and reserves the right to cancel in whole or in part this Request for Proposal if it is in the best interest of the Board to do so.

An Offeror may not be recommended for funding regardless of the merits of the proposal submitted if it has a history of contract non-compliance with the Mid-Carolina Regional Council or the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board or any other funding source. Subcontracting is not permitted.

The Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board or its Executive Committee will vote on the independent contractor's recommendation for the One-Stop Operator award. The Chief Elected Officials Board will vote on the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board's approval.

Offerors who have submitted a proposal may protest the award of the contract. Protests must be filed electronically and be received by the Board's consultant at malaw528@aol.com by September 12, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. central. All protests are public information after the protest period ends.

1. All protests must state the basis for the protest in clear terms and provide an alternative the protester finds acceptable. The basis of the protest must be a violation of a State or Federal contracting law, rule, or regulation applicable to the contracting process.

2. During any part of the review or consideration, the protester may be asked to clarify or amplify statements or to provide proof of claims or other statements. Any such requests must be fully responded to within the time designated. In the event a protester fails to respond, the protest will be dismissed and no further protest will be accepted relative to this Request for Proposals.
3. The consultant will review the protest and will issue a written response that is intended as a complete and final answer to the protest. A response will be issued no later than September 18, 2023.
4. The consultant will document the submission of a protest and the findings and provide the information to the administrative entity for official documentation along with a report to the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board.

Eligible Applicants

Organizations eligible to submit proposals may fall within any of the following categories:

- Governmental Agencies
- Private Non-Profit Organizations
- Private For-Profit Businesses
- Educational Entities
- Consortium of entities that at a minimum, includes three or more of the required one-stop partners of demonstrated effectiveness, located in the Local Area.

One-Stop Operator Roles and Responsibilities

The One-Stop Operator must coordinate the service delivery of core and required one-stop partners and other community partners working with the Career Centers in Cumberland, Moore, and Sampson Counties. This includes managing partner responsibilities that are outlined in the local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The WIOA MOU serves the key purpose of defining partner roles and focuses, in part, on the shaping of the workforce system. This includes the sharing of resources, referral agreements, etc. In the end, the overall goal is to ensure efficiency within the Mid-Carolina workforce system.

WIOA was signed into law on July 22, 2014, and went into effect July 1, 2015. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WIOA has two tiers of partners: Core Program Partners and Required Partners.

The Core Program Partners who are required to collaborate and participate in the One-Stop System include: WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth; Wagner-Peyser labor

exchange; Adult Education and Literacy; and Vocational Rehabilitation. Core Program Partners are in the common performance measures pool and must work closely together to achieve success.

Required Program Partners must participate in the MOU process and provide coordinated services with the One-Stop Centers. Required program partners include the four Core Program Partners as well as: Career and Technical Education, Title V Older Americans, Job Corps, Native American Programs, Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Veterans, YouthBuild, Trade Act, Community Services Block Grant, HUD, Unemployment Compensation, Second Chance, and TANF. In the event any of the required partners do not have funding in this request for proposal One-Stop Operator designated counties their participation is waived.

The One-Stop Operator will be the point of contact regarding issues pertaining to collecting promising practices, success stories, and complaints that are substantive to the required partners operating in the Centers. This will include convening partner meetings on a regular basis as well as stakeholder meetings including all core program partners and advising the Administrative Entity and Board Staff on partner operational challenges and successes.

The primary responsibilities of the One-Stop Operator include the coordination of partners and service delivery. The One-Stop Operator will ensure the ongoing participation, support, collaboration, and consensus-building needed for success among the primary groups working at the Career Centers (e.g., Division of Workforce Services staff, Service Provider staff, and partners). Accordingly, the One-Stop Operator will have functional supervision authority over the designated NCWorks Career Center Manager(s), as necessary, to ensure ongoing growth of unduplicated client enrollments and increases in unduplicated numbers of services provided to those clients.

The One-Stop Operator must do the following:

- Disclose, and provide an explanation of, any potential conflicts of interest arising from the proposal and potential selection of the one-stop operator(s) with respect to relationships with particular training service providers or other service providers, including but not limited to, career services providers and partners
- In coordinating services and serving as a one-stop operator, agree to refrain from establishing practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require long-term services, such as intensive employment, training, and education services
- Comply with Federal regulations and procurement policies relating to the calculation and use of profits.
- Facilitate core program partner meetings monthly and submit minutes of the meetings to the Board staff.
- Facilitate required partner meetings quarterly and submit minutes of the meetings to the Board staff.
- Collect and prepare information on core program partner performance quarterly and submit to Board staff.
- Ensure the resource room and welcome desk in each Center is covered.

- Work with the Board staff and partners to create and/or modify a Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement.
- Report on Center statistics quarterly to the Board staff and Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board as required by the Board.
- Submit partner success stories regarding their services and outcomes to the Board staff quarterly.
- Prepare a schedule of events for each Center monthly and submit to the Board staff the first day of each month.
- Facilitate customer flow, customer service, initial assessment, resource room usage, tracking, and referral processes as agreed upon in the WIOA MOU
- Act as the first-line, intermediary for addressing/resolving problems attendant to partner roles, relationships and coordinated responsibilities as such relates to the One-Stop System
- Communicating Board and Administrative policies and procedures to all partners ensuring adhere to all applicable WIOA rules, regulations, and policies; Implementing all applicable local policies and other requirements; and, recommending revisions to existing local policies or other requirements or the need for additional ones, in cooperation with the local board.
- Communication with Workforce Development Partners on job fairs, recruitment events and other related workforce center activities/events. Participate in activities/events work groups as required or as defined by the Board staff.
- Coordinate and fully implement the requirements and offerings outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act through NCWorks Career Center partners.
- Establish a methodology for measuring customer service and ensuring services are of the highest quality and are meeting customer needs and the needs of the Mid-Carolina labor market.
- Lead the movement to establish the NCWorks Career Centers and affiliated partners as the “go-to” resource for workforce development offerings in our area, including business services
- Work with the MCWDB to improve the reputation and appearance of the NCWorks Career Center(s)
- Coordinate and lead staff trainings and other specialized offerings that enhance opportunities for NCWorks Career Center staff and partners to develop advanced skills in leadership, customer service, specialized workforce development skills, networking, understanding, and presenting labor market information, and other skills to be determined.
- Maintain One Stop Certification requirements.
- Participate in bi-weekly scheduled meetings with the Workforce Executive Director and/or Workforce Deputy Director.
- Participate in full Board and sub-committee meetings as requested by the Board staff.

The One-Stop Operator will submit a written and verbal report on work accomplished and challenges encountered on a quarterly basis to the Workforce Deputy Director for the Board.

Proposals must identify a lead staff person and indicate how the lead is compliant with

firewall requirements between administration and Center operations as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

One-Stop Operator Budget

Proposals must include a detailed budget that shows all costs related to serving as One-Stop Operator. Budget detail should include categorizing costs as direct, indirect, administrative, or program. In the event a consortium is competitively bidding, the budget needs to clearly show how the role of One-Stop Operator will be paid for including any proposed shared costs. All proposals must include a lead staff person and associated expenses including, wages, benefits, and other costs.

Submission Information and Requirements

General Submission Information

To be considered for funding, an entity must provide a submittal for this Request for Proposals (RFP) including supporting documentation in accordance with the instructions in this RFP. When evaluating a submittal, the independent contractor will consider how well the Offeror has complied with these instructions and provided the required information. The independent contractor reserves the right to request clarifications from any Offeror regarding information in their submittals and may request an oral presentation if deemed appropriate and necessary to make a final recommendation.

Offerors may request clarification to comply with instructions during the Question-and-Answer period August 10, through August 15, 2023, at 3:00 pm central time by emailing Mary Ann Lawrence at malaw528@aol.com. Answers to the questions will be posted on <https://mccog.org/workforce-development.asp> August 19, 2023. Offerors may also request the questions and answers by emailing malaw528@aol.com after August 19, 2023.

Offerors shall not direct questions or have conversations regarding this Request for Proposals with any Board Members, Chief Elected Officials, the Consultant, or Mid-Carolina Workforce Board support staff except during the official “question” period. All questions must be communicated through malaw528@aol.com. Questions submitted should be electronic and must include in the subject line **Questions – Mid-Carolina One Stop Operator 2023**. Questions without the assigned subject line may not be considered.

The submittal, as well as any reference materials presented, must be typed in English in at least 12-point font and must be on standard portrait 8 ½ “ by 11” size with no less than one-inch margins. Landscape orientation containing charts, spreadsheets, and oversize exhibits is permissible. Submittals are limited to thirty pages or less **including** attachments and supportive information on single side of paper.

Contract Funding Source

Funding is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and is administered by Mid-Carolina Regional Council on behalf of the Chief Elected Officials in the Mid-Carolina Local

Workforce Area in partnership with the State of North Carolina.

Compliance Requirements

Any award of a contract under this Request for Proposals will be subject to applicable requirements of the funding sources, including the U.S. Department of Labor, the State of North Carolina, Mid-Carolina Regional Council, and the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board. These terms and conditions include, without limitation, provisions regarding reporting, insurance, indemnification, audits, nondiscrimination, minority and women's business enterprise requirements, veterans' priority of service, conflict of interest and local hiring provisions.

Available Funds Note

It is suggested that the Successful Offeror has a minimum of three months operating capital on-hand throughout the term of the contract.

Public Records

Offerors are advised that documents in possession of the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board are considered public records and subject to disclosure under the North Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

Contractor Qualifications and Responsibilities

All businesses/organizations must meet a minimum level of administrative and fiscal capacity in order to contract for the requested services. Therefore, the Successful Offeror must provide the following Documentation of Qualifications within a ten-day period after notification of intent to award. These **are not required to be included** in the proposal. Failure to satisfactorily provide the following documentation within a ten-day period after notification could result in disqualification of proposed award.

Documentation of Proposer's Qualifications:

- Legal entity - Proof of Incorporation, 501(c) (3), etc. and designation from the IRS of tax-exempt status, if applicable. Must submit document proving legal entity.
- Written personnel policies. Must submit table of contents of personnel policies.
- Written conflict of interest policy for staff and board. Must submit copy of Conflict-of-Interest Policy.
- Have an ongoing quality assurance process for services. Must submit description of process.
- For organizations that have more than one revenue source, must submit revenue documentation identifying the various sources of the amounts.
- Proven fiscal capacity including capacity for fund accounting. Must submit bound copy of most recent formal audit, if applicable, completed within last year. Must satisfactorily address all findings.

- Verify that the program has procured and will maintain during the life of the contract the following required insurance coverage: professional liability, errors, and omissions; commercial general liability insurance, including contractual liability insurance; business automobile liability (if applicable); worker’s compensation coverage; and employee dishonesty insurance. Must submit copies of certificate of insurance with contract.

Submittal Content and Scoring

Proposals must be received electronically by 3:00 p.m. central time on September 15, 2023, at malaw528@aol.com with a subject line of **Proposal for Mid-Carolina OSO**

Proposals will be evaluated on Three Parts:

- Part I Required Format and Content in #1 below
- Part II Experience & Approach (100 points)
- Part III Budget Detail and Staffing Structure (50 points)

1. **All submittals must contain the following documents in this order to be considered:**

- Entire submittal cannot exceed (30) thirty pages and be single-sided.
- Title Page Including Entity, Contact Person (email, phone, address).
- Executive Summary (no longer than 2 page which is included in the 30-page limit).
- Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Three References Attesting to Relevant Experience – hard copy letters preferred along with list and contact information

2. **Experience and Approach** (100 points)

0-3 points – unacceptable; 4-7 points – meets expectations; 8-10 above and beyond
Answer the following:

- One-Stop Operator (up to 10 points each)
 - Describe specific experience with serving as One-Stop Operator.
 - Detail the role and responsibilities that will be undertaken as One-Stop Operator as required in this request for proposal.
 - Provide a detailed description of a proposed client flow to ensure Core Program Partners are included in upfront services.
 - Detail the proposed oversight of the resource room.
 - Detail information on how staff and partner training will be provided.
 - Provide information on experience the organization has in regard to One-Stop Certification achievement and maintenance.
 - Describe how system and Center orientations will be provided.
 - Describe how customer service will be measured.
 - Describe organization’s experience in the workforce system and in North Carolina.
 - Describe the steps you will go through to launch the contract.

3. **Budget, Budget Narrative (50 points)**

Include in your proposed budget:

- Staffing structure including position(s), office location, and salary range

- B. Corporate structure and support services that will be provided to Mid-Carolina Workforce Board
- C. Budget narrative describing the detail for each line item
- D. Reasonableness of line items
- E. Profit or program income proposed if applicable along with payment point deliverables
- F. Indirect cost detail if applicable
- G. Administrative cost detail if applicable

Please note: The current program year will pro-rate the annual figures for the period October 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.