



**Q&A Sheet for RFP #24383 – Opportunity Youth Program**

**How should bidders justify the proposed hourly wage for program participants?**

The program should ensure all participants are placed in roles where compensation aligns with current labor market standards, promoting sustainable employment. The specific wage rate should be justified in the proposal, taking into account program and industry norms. This approach allows for flexibility while ensuring fair compensation for participants (RFP, page 19).

**What timeline should bidders propose for tracking skills gains, and what is expected within the first 90 days?**

Bidders should prioritize continuous skills development throughout the program year to demonstrate ongoing progress. The measurable skills gain (MSG), as required by WIOA, must be achieved and reported within the program year. Additionally, an initial skills gain should be observed and documented within the first 90 days as an informal, observable improvement (RFP, page 19).

**What types of credentials should bidders consider for participants to earn within 90 days, and how can they verify WIOA approval?**

Bidders should consider certifications such as basic customer service training, OSHA certifications, and industry-specific credentials that can be completed within 90 days. To ensure a credential is WIOA-approved and acceptable, bidders can use the [WIOA Approved Training search tool](#) to assist in identifying accepted credentials (RFP, page 19).

**How should bidders distinguish between skills gains and measurable skills gains in their proposals?**

Bidders should note that a skills gain refers to informal, observed improvements in a participant’s skills, while a measurable skills gain (MSG) is a formal, documented outcome required by WIOA, showing progress toward educational or employment goals (RFP, page 20).

Aspect	Skills Gains	Measurable Skills Gains (MSG)
<b>Definition</b>	Informal, observed improvements	Formal, documented progress
<b>Examples</b>	Increased participation, soft skills	Passing an exam, completing a course
<b>Documentation Needed</b>	Case Note	Case note & Official reports or certifications & Entry into IWDS

**Is flexibility allowed in the 5-year experience requirement for staff, and how should bidders address it in their proposals?**

While the RFP specifies that an Account Representative should have at least 5 years of relevant experience (RFP, page 18), flexibility may be considered if bidders provide strong justifications for alternative qualifications or a mix of relevant training and experience. Bidders should explain how their proposed staff’s qualifications align with program goals.

**How should bidders outline their strategies for serving opportunity youth and the broader out-of-school youth population?**

Bidders should detail their approach to targeting WIOA-eligible opportunity youth aged 16-24, emphasizing outreach and support services that address this group’s unique challenges (RFP, page 19). If the program intends to include non-opportunity youth, this should be addressed in the proposal and will be discussed in bidders' meetings.

**How should bidders address the use of wages versus stipends in their work-based learning strategies?**

Bidders should prioritize wages for work-based learning experiences to connect participants to employment and support sustainable income. Stipends can be used strategically to incentivize participation in specific training milestones or preparatory activities (RFP, page 19). Proposals should clearly outline the use of wages versus stipends and how they align with program goals.

**What submission requirements should bidders follow to ensure their proposals are complete?**

Bidders must submit their proposals electronically by November 27, 2024, at 11:00 am CST. Proposals should not exceed 15 pages, use a 12-point font, and provide a clear, concise description of the proposed services. A redacted copy must also be included to comply with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Failure to submit a redacted version may lead to Lake County determining what information will be redacted if needed (RFP, pages 1-3, 29).

<b>Key Submission Requirements for Proposals</b>	
<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Details</b>
Submission Deadline	November 27, 2024, by 11:00 am CST
Submission Method	Electronic submission only
Page Limit	Maximum of 15 pages
Font Size	12-point font
Required Copies	One complete version and one redacted version for FOIA compliance
Formatting	Follow the formatting guidelines as specified in the RFP (e.g., clear organization and readability)
Compliance with FOIA	Include a redacted version to comply with the Illinois FOIA requirements. If not included, Lake County may determine redactions as needed

**What is the admissions and assessment process for participants entering training services?**

The admissions process begins with an intake assessment to evaluate participants' interests, skills, and needs. This includes:

*Informal Assessment:* One-on-one interactions and observations by the career planner.

*Formal Assessment:* Basic skills screenings to determine service priority, along with reading and math evaluations when required.

Approved assessment tools include TABE 11&12 and CASAS GOALS for English-speaking participants and BEST Literacy™ and CASAS Life and Work Reading for English Language Learners.

Results from these assessments are integrated into participants' Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for personalized planning, especially if skill deficiencies are identified.

**What type of collaboration is expected with local partners?**

Bidders should outline strategies for engaging with community organizations, educational institutions, and employers to enhance service delivery. Strong partnerships are expected to support participant training, provide work-based learning opportunities, and facilitate job placement (RFP Pages 16-19).