

Fulton, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc.

On behalf of the Greater Capital Region Workforce Investment Boards

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS #09-02 Regional Work Readiness Credential

RE-ISSUED

The Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie County Workforce Development Board, on behalf of the four Greater Capital Region Workforce Investment Boards (Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer; Saratoga, Warren, Washington; Columbia-Greene; and, Fulton, Montgomery, Schoharie), requests proposals to assist in the development of a Regional Work Readiness Credential.

BACKGROUND:

In 2008, the Greater Capital Region Workforce Investment Boards (GCR WIBs) received a three-year New York State Department of Labor grant for “Regional Economic and Workforce Transformation Strategies” for the purpose of encouraging the development of a highly skilled and technologically sophisticated workforce that is aligned with the current and future needs of business and industry. In addition to the WIBs, other partners include: state, regional and local economic development agencies; educational institutions, such as BOCES, K-12 school districts, Community Colleges, and other post secondary schools; and, private businesses representing high-tech sectors. This group of partners calls itself the Greater Capital District Workforce Coalition.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

A component activity of this grant is to coordinate the efforts of local Work Readiness programs to develop a broad-based Regional Work Readiness credentialing system. The purpose of the Work Readiness Credential is to confirm that job seekers have the basic skills necessary to succeed at entry level jobs. Last year was spent developing the skills criteria that will be incorporated into the Regional Credential. This was accomplished through an in-depth look at the existing programs that are already operated by numerous organizations and educational institutions in our region. In addition, a recommendations report was developed on how we should move this initiative forward. A complete copy of the skill criteria and the plan is called *Recommendations for a Regional Work Readiness Certificate* and it can be found at:

<http://www.columbiagreenetworks.org/Greater%20Capital%20Region%20Work%20Readiness%20Certificate%20Recommendations.pdf>

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

The Contractor will be responsible for acting as the Regional Work Readiness Credential Champion, and will be in charge of driving the implementation efforts of the initiative by:

1. **Developing the Programmatic Structure of the Regional Credential** – Last year the Coalition worked with regional partners to develop agreement regarding the skills that should be incorporated into the credential and acceptable methods of evaluating if participants have developed those skills. This year the Contractor must work with local programs and the Coalition to complete the following tasks:
 - ◆ Determine the minimum level of competence for each of the skills that are incorporated into the credential.
 - ◆ Develop an application and review process so that local work readiness programs can be certified as a participating member of the Regional Credential by demonstrating the quality of their individual program.
 - ◆ Develop quality assurance procedures that will allow the Regional Credential to maintain quality standards. This may include developing processes of handling complaints, performing periodic reviews of local programs and outcomes, and possibly making revisions to overall credential criteria.

2. **Developing a Marketing Plan – The Coalition is in the process of developing a logo and name.** Once this is accomplished the Contractor will be responsible for promoting the regional brand. For outreach and marketing efforts to be successful, the Contractor will need to develop a region communication plan that considers the following:
 - ◆ *Target various audiences*
 - Internal – businesses, schools, workforce, parents, etc.
 - External – use as an asset for economic development
 - ◆ *Adopt a consistent message*
 - Standards based
 - Regional collaboration
 - Workforce quality
 - ◆ *Use various media*
 - Facebook and You Tube
 - Community presentations
 - Video magazines

3. **Working with the Coalition’s Business Intermediary to Communicate the Value of the Credential to Employers** – The contractor will provide the Business Intermediary with the marketing materials necessary for the Business Intermediary to work regionally to promote the new brand among employers, making them aware of the network of programs in the region that certify individuals for employability.
Strategies to consider:
 - ◆ Regional presentations provided at standing meetings about the Regional Credential – how it enhances overall quality of the regional talent pool and is a strategy for reducing turnover and recruitment costs.
 - ◆ Joint press release of Chambers of Commerce within the region noting acceptance of the Regional Credential.
 - ◆ Utilize private sector WIB members to promote the Regional Credential.

4. **Working with the Coalition's Business Intermediary to Create Ongoing Business Involvement** – The Contractor will accept referrals from the Business Intermediary of business leaders and representative organizations who may be interested in participating with Regional Credential in some way. This may include:
 - ◆ Employer participation in the governance and strategic planning
 - ◆ Employers offer certificate to incumbent workers
 - ◆ Business leaders provide subject matter expertise for curriculum development
 - ◆ Employers recognize the credential by providing employment interview guarantee for certificate holders
5. **Developing an Electronic Library** – The Contractor must maintain relationships with existing work readiness programs to continue to integrate their various program competencies into the Regional Credential and help us build upon effective aspects of each program. This will mean the ability of programs to easily share best practices, materials and evaluation methods with each other.
6. **Develop a Funding Strategy** – The Consultant will work on developing a model that is most appropriate given budget constraints. There must be a method of continuing this effort after the New York State Department of Labor grant for “Regional Economic and Workforce Transformation Strategies is completed in June 2011. Possible options include, but are not limited to:
 - ◆ Find additional public grants or foundation money to support the regional activities.
 - ◆ Incorporate the certificate into existing and future plans of work of participating programs and reach shared work agreements.
 - ◆ Charge programs membership fees.

PROJECT PARAMETERS:

- The Consultant will be required to be available, by phone or in person, during regular business hours (Monday – Friday from 8 am – 5:00 pm) for scheduled meetings. The Consultant may also be required to attend some evening meetings with community or business groups.
- The GCR WIBS makes the final decision about when the Project Objectives have been met.
- Payments to the Consultant include all costs incurred in project completion, including but not limited to: supplies and materials, travel costs, and phone costs.
- Consultant will acknowledge and agree that contributions to the development of all proprietary information for the GCR WIBS was done in the course and within the scope of the project and that all work product arising and resulting from project efforts is the property of the New York GCR WIBS.
- Consultant will acknowledge and agree that all of the work product that is developed, directly or indirectly, as a result of this project with the GCR WIBS, were “works made for hire” as defined in the United States Copyright Act and as such the New York State Department of Labor will be deemed as the “author” of such work product for Copyright Law purposes.

PROJECT TIMELINE: The project will end on June 11, 2010.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: All questions should be submitted to:

Gail B. Breen, Executive Director
Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties
Workforce Development Board, Inc.
Email: gbreen@fmsworkforcesolutions.org

Questions and answers will be posted at www.fmsworkforcesolutions.org

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

The contract with the consultant will be with the project's grant recipient, the Fulton, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board. The consultant will be paid based on the completion of activities. Activities must be completed to the satisfaction of the GCR WIBS. Payment covers all costs involved in completing project objectives, including supplies, materials and travel expenses.

- Total project cost to be negotiated, but not to exceed \$25,000.00.
- 25% upon receipt of a signed contract and conclusion of satisfactory start-up meeting.
- 25% upon completion of project objectives #1 and #2.
- 25% upon documentation of effort in completing project objectives #3 and #4.
- 15% upon completion and receipt of project objective #5, Development of an Electronic Library
- 10% upon documentation of effort in completing project objective #6, Development of a Funding Strategy

SELECTION PROCEDURE: Persons or organizations interested in responding to this request should submit a letter of intent, summary of qualifications, a resume and/or curriculum vita.

- The letter of intent with summary of qualifications and resume should provide previous experience with completing similar activities/projects.
- The summary of qualifications should include a description of other work/project activities the applicant will be responsible for completing during the same timeframe as this project.
- The summary of qualifications should also confirm that the Consultant would be available by phone or in person during regular business hours and some evening hours for scheduled meetings during the timeframe of the project.
- Proposed Work Plan outlining the steps to be taken and the time frame proposed to reach the goals, and proposed total cost of the project.
- Preference will be given to applicants with previous experience in workforce development, education, business training and/or human resource management.

- An interview with GCR WIBS staff may be required prior to selection.
- Bidders must demonstrate the ability to provide the required services at a reasonable cost to the FMS WDB. Costs will be evaluated based not only on competitiveness with respect to their bids, but equally important, the value they reflect in light of services proposed and bidder's capability and experience.

Reservation Clauses: The FMS WDB, in order to serve the best interests of the FMS Workforce Investment Area and its regional partners, reserves the right to:

- Postpone or cancel this RFP upon notification to all bidders
- Amend the specifications after their release with appropriate notice to all bidders
- Request bidders to present supplemental information clarifying their proposal, either in writing or in formal presentation
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification to the bidder
- Reject any and/or all proposals received in response to this RFP
- Contact bidders' references as a check on qualifications
- Award the contract to other than the lowest bidder
- Negotiate with selected bidder prior to contract award
- Disqualify any bidder who inappropriately acquires information contained in a competitor's proposal and attempts to use that information to influence the award decision

Contract Cancellation: The FMS WDB reserves the right to cancel the contract or any part thereof, at any time, upon thirty (30) days written notice. If, in the judgment of the FMS WDB, the Contractor fails to perform the work in accordance with the contract, the FMS WDB may terminate the contract immediately by written notice for cause. The FMS WDB may elect to provide a corrective action period prior to termination.

SUBMISSIONS: A letter of intent, summary of qualifications, and resume should be no longer than 10 pages in length. Three (3) paper copies and one (1) electronic copy of the complete bid package must be postmarked and received by the Workforce Development Board by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 18, 2009. Proposals may be hand-delivered or sent by mail to:

Gail B. Breen, Executive Director
 Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties
 Workforce Development Board, Inc.
 2620 Riverfront Center
 Amsterdam, New York 12010
 (518) 842-3676, Ext. 3026
 Email: gbreen@fmsworkforcesolutions.org

Faxed copies will not be accepted. Bids received after 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 18th, 2009 will not be eligible for funding consideration. Use of certified, registered or express mail is suggested for postmark verification.

All bids and accompanying information become the property of the Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties Workforce Development Board, Inc. and will not be returned.