

Workforce Florida, Inc.

Solicitation for Intent to Offer
for
Replication of the CHOICE Career Institute
August 2, 2004

1.0 PURPOSE. WFI intends to fund projects that replicate the Community High Okaloosa Institutes for Career Education (CHOICE). The funded projects will replicate the CHOICE program developed and implemented by the Okaloosa County School Board in school year 2003-04. Funding will be limited to regional workforce boards (RWBs). RWBs will be required to subcontract with local school boards and/or schools, however, so in that sense the RWBs will act as the administrative entity with the majority of these funds passing to the schools for implementation.

The purpose of this Solicitation for Intent to Offer is to determine regional board interest in submitting applications for funding to implement these replication projects. Selecting regional boards for funding for these projects will be a two-step process:

Step 1. Regional boards that are interested in obtaining funds for a replication project will complete a Notice of Intent to Offer and provide the required assurances; and then,

Step 2. Grant solicitations will be issued ONLY to those regional boards that have submitted a Notice of Intent to Offer and assurances. Review and award of the grant solicitations will follow the process that WFI normally uses for review and award of grants to RWBs.

RWBs that choose not to submit a Notice of Intent to Offer in response to this first-step solicitation WILL NOT be eligible to apply when the Grant Solicitation is issued.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION. This replication of the CHOICE program initiative had its origins in the series of statewide meetings that brought together a number of agencies and organizations which are stakeholders in programs that assist youth. These meetings were titled, “Strengthening Youth Partnerships.” The objective of these meetings of stakeholders in youth issues was to enhance communications, coordination and planning or to establish such collaboration where it did not exist. The stated goal coming out of these meetings was to,

“Do everything possible to ensure every young person in Florida is ready and able to pursue a meaningful job path.”

To support that goal, the statewide youth partners agreed to three avenues in which to direct resources – handicapped youth, at-risk youth and *replication of the CHOICE career institute model.*

The Request for Proposals (RFP) resulting from this Solicitation for Intent to Offer will seek proposals that start or expand existing career institutes in the areas of information technology, health sciences and/or construction technology within the high school or school district vocational setting to be modeled after the CHOICE program. The sixteen (16) career cluster areas developed

and approved by the U.S. Department of Education provides the foundation for the career institutes that have been or are planned to be implemented in the CHOICE program (refer to www.careerclusters.org).

Funding for this initiative comes from a pool of \$1.4 million allocated to the First Jobs/First Wages Council and will be a mix of WIA and TANF dollars. It is WFI's intent, if possible, to fund both the best projects out of this CHOICE initiative and the F/F juvenile offender 'Connect' initiative which will be issued as a separate Request for Proposals. All of the \$1.4 million may be used for 'CHOICE' or 'Connect' or, preferably, both.

It is intended that this will be an integrated, multi-program, multi-funded project within a region or county. When proposals are invited, they will be required to include local, matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the funds that WFI will provide. These matching funds may come from RWB formula dollars and/or matching funds from local, mandatory 'partners' – participating school boards, superintendents, individual schools and local businesses or business associations.

Term. The exact term of the funding that will be provided by WFI for projects resulting from this two-step solicitation has not been determined. That information will be in the RFP. However, WFI recognizes the amount of coordination and preplanning required to implement this project and will take that into consideration when it decides on the term for these projects.

Basic Tenets of the CHOICE Model.

More specifics will be provided in the RFP, but generally the CHOICE model includes but is not limited to the following tenets –

- A structure for organizing career training to ensure that it focuses on viable occupations and industry certifications;
- Career training should be based on economic (both local and national) indicators, student/parent preferences and business partnerships;
- Utilizing existing facilities (high schools, vo-tech centers, business environments) for providing training;
- CHOICE is an acronym but it also stands for the 'choices' students and parents should have in course expectations that lead to employment, articulation to other vocational programs or associate degree programs or under-graduate degree programs; the curriculum will bridge students to or among these destinations;
- Career institutes must be available to all students provided they meet certain minimum standards;
- Business partnerships and financial involvement are an integral part of the CHOICE model;

Again, there are other tenets within the CHOICE model and specifics will be provided in the RFP.

NOTE: There is an extensive implementation guide that WFI will provide with the RFP to RWBs that submit an acceptable Notice of Intent to Offer. If they choose, RWBs considering this project may access the Okaloosa School District site for information regarding CHOICE at -- <http://www.okaloosaschools.com/choice>

3.0 Submittal of a Notice of Intent to Offer. Responses to this solicitation are limited to regional workforce boards (RWBs) ONLY. Responses to the subsequent RFP are limited to those RWBs that provide a Notice of Intent to Offer. WFI is interested in some assurances that RWBs have collaborated to the extent possible with local partners who will be required to participate, both financially and programmatically, in the replication project. To provide those assurances RWBs will simply complete and submit the attached Notice of Intent to Offer (Attachment A) along with letters, on the organization's letterhead, from business or business association partners, school boards, superintendents and potentially participating school principals. Such letters can be brief but must *clearly* indicate the partners' understanding of the local financial **AND** program support required for the replication project. The letters do not need to commit the partners to any specific dollar amounts for the local match but it needs to indicate that they understand that a local match is going to be required when a proposal is developed and submitted.

Basically, these letters from local educational and business partners will just provide some assurance to WFI that initial, local collaboration has been accomplished and that there is recognition of the basic scope of the project and the financial investment that will be required.

4.0 Request for Proposals (RFP). WFI anticipates that the RFP which follows this solicitation will be issued within 2- 3 weeks after the due date (8/18) for this Notice of Intent to Offer. When it issues the RFP, it is WFI's intent to allow sufficient time for RWBs to firm up its local partnerships, obtain matching funds commitments and prepare the proposal. The RFP will require that local partners identify the amount of their financial commitment to this project. Since this Notice of Intent to Offer requires only that RWBs obtain *assurances* from its local partners that they understand that they must make a financial commitment to this project, RWBs have the additional time between the issuance of this document and the issuance and due date for responses to the RFP to obtain those specific local financial commitments.

5.0 DUE DATE for Notice of Intent to Offer. The Notice of Intent to Offer (Attachment A) along with letters from the required local partners must be submitted by

5:00 PM, EDT, August 18, 2004

Notices of Intent to Offer should be directed to: **Workforce Florida, Inc
1974 Commonwealth Lane
Tallahassee, Florida 32303
ATTN: Mike Johnson**

Notice of Intent to Offer

Replication of the CHOICE Career Institute

REGION NO.	
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Based on an understanding of the representations in this solicitation, the undersigned hereby expresses an interest in this project and provides this notice of intent to offer a proposal conditioned solely upon the undersigned's understanding and agreement to the terms of the RFP when it is issued and the ability to commit local partnerships and matching funds at that time. There is no implied obligation to submit a proposal. Further, there is no implied obligation to commit any level of funds by the undersigned nor by any of the individuals or organizations represented in the attached letters.

Identify the specific person and that person's title represented in the attached letters. There should be at least one letter for each category below (except 'Other'). If more than one letter is submitted for a partner category, list the names/titles of each. Letters may but do not need to identify specific matching fund amounts but each letter MUST indicate an understanding that matching funds will be required.

Partner Organization	Person's Name & Title
1. School Board	
2. Superintendent	
3. School (HS or Vo-Tech) Principal(s)	
4. Business(es)	
5. Business Association(s)	
6. Other (please specify)	

SIGNED:	
	Executive Director Date

NOTE: Be sure to include copies of letters on the organization's letterhead and submit to

**Workforce Florida, Inc.
1974 Commonwealth lane
Tallahassee, FL 32303
ATTN: Mike Johnson**

DUE DATE: 5:00 PM. EDT, August 18, 2004