

Employ Florida Banner Center

RFP dated 6/15/2007 – Q & A

Listed below is a full compilation of all questions received during the question period of this RFP. The questions are listed in order of receipt.

Question:

Is WFI pushing for the creation of short term training in the selected areas? I ask this since training completions and placements are performance pay points and most training at this level is two full years, although some very specialized training (i.e. Correctional Officer) is available in a shorter time period.

Answer:

The Banner Center initiative focuses on the creation of business-led, market-relevant training programs identified by employers in these selected industry sectors as the “most needed” training for “most needed” occupations in their industry today. The training may be entry-level or skills upgrade training and ideally lead to the receipt of industry-recognized credentials. The training will likely articulate to higher educations opportunities, which are usually longer in length. Utilizing input from businesses in this industry sector, the existence of strong partnerships with industry is a key element of the establishment of an industry-driven Banner Center. The training outcomes and how they relate to pay points, or deliverables, will be based on the content of the awarded respondent’s proposal.

Question:

The eligibility description in section 3.0 does not reference income. Why not?

Answer:

Funding for these Banner Centers is from state-level WIA funds. For this reason, income of trainees is not a factor in determining WIA eligibility. The criteria by which to determine WIA eligibility is outlined on page 5 of the RFP.

Question:

Must WIA funds be used to pay for the tuition of people who are offered as numbers completing training and placed or is anyone trained in the program created under this funding a potential performance?

Answer:

WIA funds may pay the tuition of some students, depending on the details of the contract, but are not to be considered the sole source for all training under this project. Students, businesses, and Regional Workforce Boards are also a potential source of funding for training through the Employ Florida Banner Centers. With this being a WIA funded project, we envision all trainings of WIA Eligible participants to be captured in the Employ Florida Marketplace, the state’s Management Information System for the tracking of workforce project outcomes.

Question:

Do any of the funds awarded under this contract have to be used on individuals or can it all be devoted to development and delivery of the training?

Answer:

All funds should be devoted to the development and deployment of industry-driven training. The training of individuals will be a required component of any Banner Center contract.

Question:

Many large corporations have large IT departments that provide services to other sectors of the corporation and often to customers/clients. Can a large corporation with a designated IT department fall within the definition of an "IT industry sector"?

Answer:

No. Virtually all businesses, government and private sector, have some IT component to their organization, however, these businesses are not considered within the IT industry sector. All businesses are coded under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) which defines the primary type of business operation. This code will define whether the company is within the IT industry sector as providing goods or services.

Question:

What would qualify as a "regional workforce board"? In central Florida we have the Florida High Tech Corridor Council and the Central Florida Economic Development Council; we also have at the county level the Polk Works Council. Would any or all of these qualify as a "regional workforce board"?

Answer:

No, the above mentioned entities are not Regional Workforce Boards. For a complete list of Florida's Regional Workforce Boards as well as a geographic breakdown of the 24 regions, please visit <http://www.workforceflorida.com/wages/wfi/boards/index.htm>.

Question:

Can a lead organization (e.g., a community college) have more than one Banner Center?

Answer:

No policy is in place preventing the lead recipient educational provider of an existing Banner Center from submitting a proposal for a new Banner Center in one of the two new industry sectors identified in the RFP. However, any existing Banner Center recipients may want to consider developing a relationship with another educational provider in the industry sector of interest exploring the potential of becoming a secondary educational partner in the project.

Question:

Will it be acceptable to have a partnership among several entities located in different workforce regions?

Answer:

Absolutely! This is definitely preferable, as the Banner Centers goal should create statewide impact. This is a statewide initiative, not a regional program. Please refer to the Executive Summary if more detail is needed.

Question:

In the above case, should the Workforce Board in each region be a partner?

Answer:

Most definitely! The Regional Workforce Board for each education partner must be engaged and involved in the project. Information detailing the relationship between all of the proposed Banner Center educational partners and each corresponding regional board must be included in the submission of your proposal.

Question:

Where can we get an official definition for "high skill, high wage"?

Answer:

There is no reference to "high skill, high wage" in the RFP. This initiative is designed to positively impact a specific industry of importance to Florida's economy. These industries typically require a highly skilled workforce and pay wages higher than the statewide average.

Question:

Do you anticipate that the occupations sector for alternative energy will soon be added to the list of target industry sectors?

Answer:

At this time, Alternative Energy has been identified as an "emerging industry" by Enterprise Florida. Please visit <http://www.eflorida.com/ContentSubpage.aspx?id=312> for more information. The Employ Florida Banner Center for Alternative Energy, working with their industry sector partners will identify the occupations within this industry sector for comparison to the Targeted Occupations List (TOL) for the regional boards encompassing the education partner's locations. If a region's TOL does not include these occupations, then a request to have these occupations added to the region's Targeted Occupations List can be submitted by the Regional Workforce Board.

Question:

Will students be expected to pay for the training they receive at the Banner Centers?

Answer:

Each Banner Center is responsible for developing sustainable income sources and training fees or tuition could be one of the sources.

Question:

Will students at Banner Centers receive a stipend and/or travel expenses from the Banner Center?

Answer:

WFI's contract will be a performance based contract with established payments for established outcomes. Stipends and travel expenses will not be part of a Banner Center contract. The Contractor will be responsible for identifying the training costs for students and/or employed workers.

Question:

What exactly are the WIA criteria?

Answer:

Please see Section 3.0 of the RFP that offers the following:

“The following criteria are used to determine WIA-eligibility:

A person must be 1) 18 years of age or older; 2) a United States citizen or a non-citizen authorized to work in the United States; 3) if a male and at least 18 years of age but not yet 26 years of age, such person must be registered with the U.S. Selective Service; and, 4) if a male and 26 years of age or older and is not registered with the U.S. Selective Service, such person must obtain an advisory letter from the U.S. Selective Service showing that he did not willfully and knowingly fail to register with the U.S. Selective Service.”

Question:

Must ALL students or trainees served by this grant be WIA eligible, whether entry level new hires, advanced level occupations new hires, or skills upgrades for existing workers? Or may the Banner Center serve all new and incumbent IT workers, but only WIA candidates can have their training paid for by the grant? COMMENT: Given Digital/Interactive Media/IT salaries, finding advanced level occupations trainees, or even incumbent worker candidates, who meet WIA definitions might be very hard. Given that the IT Banner Center is targeting high-wage jobs, finding entry level WIA candidates who can be trained in only one year to be placed in a high wage IT or Digital Media position is likely to be challenging. Frequently there are significant educational basic skill deficiencies that need to be overcome.

Answer:

All students or trainees served by this grant must be WIA eligible. Income levels of these individuals are not a factor of the eligibility determination. Please see Section 3.0 of the RFP relating to eligibility requirements.

Question:

Can all workers be counted as a deliverable for persons having been trained, or only WIA-certified workers? Or can a mix of WIA-certified and non-WIA certifiable workers be counted as deliverables?

Answer:

As this is a WIA funded initiative, ALL persons trained must be WIA Eligible and participant reporting data must be input to the Employ Florida Marketplace (EFM), the state’s Management Information System for the tracking of workforce project outcomes.

Question:

On pg. 10, # 9, Proposal Submittal Requirements, please clarify the last line in the 4th paragraph which reads, “...along with sufficient detail regarding how those funds will be utilized (major cost categories). Are we to provide information only for “major cost categories” and if so, what are they?

Answer:

We simply want a financial roll-up of desired grant funds, leveraged funds, and potential project income and a breakdown of cost items based on deploying your plans to establish and implement the Employ Florida Banner Center. This information must support your vision of the Banner Center as detailed in your proposal.

Question:

We would like confirmation that the period of performance will be one year from the date the contract is signed.

Answer:

The contract term will be one year as stated in the RFP.

Question:

Is there any way to structure deliverable tasks such that funds can become available within the first month after contract initiation?

Answer:

WFI's contract will be a performance based contract with established payments for established outcomes. No funds will be "fronted" or "front-end loaded". The awarded respondent will become a vendor of WFI's and will enter into a performance based contract requiring the achievement of the deliverables prior to submission for payment. Submissions will be reviewed and, if accepted based on quality, will then be approved for payment. In some cases, the first deliverable may be due within 30-60 days after contract execution.

Question:

Under the terms of the Banner Grant contract with the contractor, who would pay the training costs of WIA-eligible participants who are training for entry level positions? The local Workforce Board? Or would the contractor be expected to "front" the costs of this training and only be reimbursed afterwards as the deliverable is validated?

Answer:

Again, the contract will be a performance based contract with established payments for established outcomes. Outcomes must take place before any payments are made. For the question "who would pay for the training", the training fees or tuition could be paid from a number of sources.

Question:

In Section 6.1 of the RFP, it says "It is the intent of this RFP that the educational respondents demonstrate a strong, EXISTING COLLABORATION with businesses in the targeted industry sector. . .". Is the 'industry' sector that is being referred to here one of the two (IT or Alternative Energy)? or does it apply to an industry sector that the institution applying for the Banner Center has had success in as an example? For example, we have proven successes in industry-needs programs but not in the Alternative Energy sector which is what we are interested in. Does your statement refer to the industry sector for which the banner center would serve?

Answer:

The answer is "YES". Our preference in the Banner Center initiative is to identify those educational providers who have strong existing relationships with businesses in the industry sector and thus can be more responsive in furthering "cutting-edge" programs tailored to the needs of these industries. Given that many of these companies can be located statewide, we anticipate educational providers will partner with additional educational entities who offer complementary programs that can enhance their current offering and assist in creating a statewide reach for the Banner Center. Then, proposals would be developed looking at how these providers, working together, can create new industry-driven workforce development curricula and training designed to make Florida's workforce globally competitive in these industry sectors.