Employ Prince George’s, Inc.

PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY
APPRENTICESHIP EXPANSION STUDY & STRATEGY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP No.: EPGRFP-001

Project Title: Prince George’s County Apprenticeship Expansion Study & Strategy
RFP Release Date: Thursday, December 1, 2022
Virtual Bidders Conference: Friday, December 9, 2022 | 4:00 pm – 4:45 pm EST
Proposal Due Date: Friday, December 30, 2022 | 3:00 pm EST

Proposals must be submitted via email no later than Friday, December 30, 2022 at 3:00 pm. Proposals must be submitted to Employ Prince George’s, Inc. Contracts & Operations Department at rfpsubmissions@co.pg.md.us. PROPOSALS SUBMITTED AFTER 3:00 PM EASTERN STANDARD TIME (EST) ON DECEMBER 30, 2022, WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Employ Prince George’s is not responsible for any errors of omission. Mailed, faxed, hand delivered proposal, or proposals submitted outside of the submission process listed above will not be accepted.

Employ Prince George’s, Inc. does not discriminate against faith-based organizations or against any Bidders or Proposer(s) because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment.
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INTRODUCTION

Employ Prince George’s, Inc. (Employ Prince George’s or EPG), serving as the principal workforce development service provider for Prince George’s County and a career services provider of the Prince George’s County Workforce Development Board, is the recipient of American Rescue Plan Act grant funds from the Maryland Department of Labor and Prince George’s County. This funding was allocated with minimal local and state restrictions, a mandate to follow federal regulations, and a Maryland General Assembly requirement for American Rescue Plan Act funds distributed by the Maryland Department of Labor to expand apprenticeship and employment training programs.

Employ Prince George’s, receiving and leveraging American Rescue Plan Act funds from the Prince George’s County Workforce Development Board (originating from the Maryland Department of Labor) and Prince George’s County Government, has budgeted American Rescue Plan Act funds to operate its Apprenticeship Innovation Program (AIP). American Rescue Plan Act funds will be used to expand registered apprenticeships with the overall goal of developing and aligning apprenticeships programs and pre-apprenticeship training in Prince George’s County and increasing the number of participating Prince George’s County residents in apprenticeships.

ISSUING ENTITY

Employ Prince George's is a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in Prince George's County, Maryland. Employ Prince George's administers a menu of workforce development services for job seekers and businesses. The mission of Employ Prince George's is to improve the local economy by creating a demand-driven workforce system with workforce development programs that deliver qualified workers to businesses, improves the productivity of businesses, and provides job seekers with opportunities for careers in high demand/high growth industries.

Employ Prince George's serves as the Staff and Fiscal Agent of the Prince George's County Workforce Development Board. As the Staff and Fiscal Agent of the Workforce Development Board, Employ Prince George's is responsible for regulating policy development and the administration of workforce activities related to services and programs funded by the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Under the leadership of Employ Prince George's, the Prince George's County Workforce Development Area serves over 30,000 job seekers and 4,000 businesses annually.

Employ Prince George's is Prince George's County's link between job seekers looking to begin or change careers, and businesses looking for skilled workers to maintain competitiveness in a changing labor market.

BACKGROUND

To assist Employ Prince George’s achieve its mission, the Apprenticeship Innovation Program was created in 2018. The Apprenticeship Innovation Program (AIP) Serves as an apprenticeship intermediary providing customized services to design, register and operate Registered Apprenticeships, Industry Recognized/Associated Apprenticeships, Youth Apprenticeships, and Pre-Apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Innovation Program is dedicated to increasing and expanding apprenticeships and improving apprenticeship linkages between job seekers, businesses, industry associations, government entities, occupational skills training providers, post-secondary institutions, K-12 educational providers, research entities and the Maryland Department of Labor. The goal of the Apprenticeship Innovation Program is to increase the number of apprenticeships operating in Prince George’s County and increase the number of Prince George’s County residents participating in apprenticeships.
PURPOSE

Employ Prince George’s has released this Request for Proposals to receive detailed proposals, from eligible entities, to conduct a comprehensive study of the Prince George’s County labor market and economic landscape, develop an apprenticeship asset map of the Prince George’s County Public Workforce System (www.pgcajc.com), perform an assessment of current apprenticeship programming operated in the United States, Prince George’s County and the State of Maryland, utilize the data and information collected from the activities previously listed to create a Prince George’s County Apprenticeship Expansion Study & Strategy, for 2023 through 2026, that Employ Prince George’s Apprenticeship Innovation Program can lead. The Prince George’s County Apprenticeship Expansion Strategy should be developed and released in two forms: a comprehensive, and professional published, guide used internally for Employ Prince George’s staff and professionally published executive overview produced in a manner and quality for public consumption and review.

EXPARTE COMMUNICATION/ CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Each Bidder shall ensure that no improper, unethical, or illegal relationships or conflicts of interest whether actual or apparent exist between or among the Bidder, Employ Prince George’s, and any other parties to this RFP. The Bidder is responsible for disclosing at the point of proposal submission or as soon as the situation arises of any such relationships. This includes interests that they may have with any individual or entity doing business with or proposing to do business with Employ Prince George’s (EPG) or the Workforce Development Board (WDB). An employee or official may not be employed by or have a financial interest in any entity subject to their authority or of the Prince George’s County agency, board, or commission of which they are affiliated; or entity that is negotiating or has a contract with that agency, board, or commission; or hold other position that may impair their judgment or impartiality.

EPG reserves the right to determine the pertinence of such relationships, when discovered or disclosed, whether intended or not, and to decide whether the Bidder’s disqualifications and/or cancellation shall be at no fault or liability whatsoever to EPG. Employ Prince George’s determination regarding any question of conflict of interest will be final. All EPG Board members, officers, and staff are precluded from entertaining questions concerning the completion of the proposal or the procurement process outside the confines of the Pre-Proposal Bidders’ Conference. Potential bidders are asked to respect these conditions by not making personal requests for assistance, except at the conference.

ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT

Eligible applicants include non-profit and for-profit organizations, private sector entities, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and other entities operating in accordance with federal, state, and local law, and must have been in business for at least three years. Applicants must be an incorporated organization. Eligible applicants must be in good standing with the federal government. Organizations currently barred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by a Federal, State, City, or County department/agency, quasi-governmental agency, or the WDB are ineligible to apply. A group of two or more applicants may apply as a consortium but EPG will award only one contract to the lead applicant/fiscal agent. All entities, whether directly contracted or subcontracted via the lead applicant/fiscal agent, will be held to the requirements of federal, state, and local policies. Please be aware that additional monitoring, compliance, and assessment requirements will become the responsibility of the lead applicant/fiscal agent. All selected applicants will have demonstrated experience and expertise in research and creation of high-quality written reports.
FEDERAL REGULATIONS
Award recipients providing services in response to this RFP must become familiar with the American Rescue Plan Act, US Department of the Treasury Interim Final Rule, unless stated otherwise in the final rule adopted and promulgated. Until that point, the guidance listed herein takes precedent. Furthermore, any state legislation that dictates requirements for spending American Rescue Plan Act funds must be adhered to as well.

As required by the Stevens Amendment, federal funding details for this RFP is supported by the U.S. Treasury. A total of one hundred thirty thousand dollars and zero cents ($130,000.00 USD) or 1.06 percent, of the award will be financed with federal funds.

Respondents are strongly encouraged to read these regulations prior to submitting their response to this RFP.

VIRTUAL BIDDERS CONFERENCE
All organizations intending to bid either as a sole applicant or as the lead of a consortium proposal are encouraged to attend the Virtual Bidder’s Conference scheduled for Friday, December 9, 2022, from 4:00 p.m. until 4:45 p.m. via Zoom. EPG has selected this forum to present detailed non-competitive information regarding the RFP and answer questions so that interested parties will have the benefit of the same answers. The conference will provide an overview of the RFP and bidding process and will be recorded for reference. Information for the Virtual Bidder’s Conference will be provided on EPG’s RFP webpage www.employpg.org/rfps/.

SCHEDULE FOR RFP SUBMISSION, REVIEW & AWARDS
With exception of proposal submission deadline, EPG reserves the right to make changes to the timeline below.

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<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<td>RFP Published</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virtual Bidder’s Conference</td>
<td>Friday, December 9, 2022, from 4:00 pm until 4:45 pm EST Click here for the Zoom Conference Link</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline to submit Proposal</td>
<td>Friday, December 30, 2022, 3:00 pm EST</td>
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<td>Selection of Successful Bidder on or around</td>
<td>January 2023</td>
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<td>Program operations to begin NO LATER THAN</td>
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TERM OF CONTRACT
EPG reserves the right to extend this award for additional performance terms at its sole discretion. Awards may be extended through December 31, 2023, without further solicitation. Within and between performance periods, consortium members may be added, changed, etc. as applicable. Contract provisions also provide for early termination for a variety of factors including non-compliance and convenience. EPG reserves the right to cancel the contract at any point if performance criteria are not met, after written notification and a 30-day period for opportunity for corrective action.

Through this RFP, a total award of one hundred thirty thousand dollars and zero cents ($130,000.00 USD) is anticipated to be available for nine (9) month term. Funds provided by this RFP (with or without reimbursement) shall not be used to duplicate services available in areas from other federal, state, or local sources.
PROPOSAL CONSIDERATIONS

Employ Prince George’s is requesting proposals for qualified entities (entities must qualify themselves in their proposal) to produce a Prince George’s County Apprenticeship Expansion Study & Strategy. At a minimum, the proposal should include the following elements:

1. Organization Background, Qualifications & Relative Projects Completed
2. Project Development Overview
   a. Comprehensive study of the Prince George’s County labor market
   b. Comprehensive study of the Prince George’s County economic landscape
   c. Development of an apprenticeship service provider asset map using the Prince George’s County Public Workforce System (www.pgcajc.com)
   d. Assessment of current apprenticeship programming operated in the United States relative to Prince George’s County
   e. Assessment of current apprenticeship programming in Prince George’s County
   f. Assessment of current apprenticeship programming in the State of Maryland,
3. Details of the Proposed Prince George’s County Apprenticeship Expansion Study
4. Details of the Proposed Prince George’s County Apprenticeship Expansion Strategy for Employ Prince George’s Apprenticeship Innovation Program, for 2023 through 2026,
5. Budget
6. References (no more than 5)

Proposals may include other elements, but proposals should not exceed 15 pages. Attachments to the core proposal, not exceeding 15 pages, are permissible.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposals will be evaluated on multitude of factors by Employ Prince George’s Selection Committee which comprised of EPG staff will review qualifications in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth herein. Proposals that are submitted timely and comply with the mandatory requirements of the RFP will be evaluated in accordance with the terms of the RFP. Any contract resulting from this RFP will not necessarily be awarded to the vendor with the lowest price. A non-exhaustive list of examples of evaluation factors are listed below:

- Project completion timelines
- Detailed project scope
- Proposal activities are detailed and included timelines
- Budget detail
  - Budget should account for at least four in-person presentations and data collection efforts
- Organizational history and expertise related to project scope
- Demonstrated ability to perform the requested services
  - References may be included in the proposal
- Knowledge of Prince George’s County, Employ Prince George’s (www.employpg.org), and the Prince George’s County Public Workforce System, branded and modeled as the Prince George’s County American Job Center Community Network (www.pgcajc.com)
- Explanation on how the entity will professionally publish the final products
  - Examples may be submitted
- Succinctness of proposal
QUESTIONS

General questions regarding this RFP or its content should be submitted in writing via email to **Employ Prince George’s Contracts & Operations Department** at rfpsubmissions@co.pg.md.us with the following subject line: Inquiry: Prince George’s County Apprenticeship Expansion Study & Strategy EPGRFP-001.

BIDDER’S CONDITIONS, REPRESENTATIONS & AUTHORIZATIONS

By submitting its proposal, each Bidder understands, represents, and acknowledges that:

A Bidder or his/her authorized representative may withdraw or modify his/her proposal by written notice received, at the Issuing Office’s address, prior to the exact hour and date specified for proposal receipt.

The Bidder’s information and representations in the proposal are material and important, and the Issuing Office may rely upon the contents of the proposal in negotiations, contractual obligations, and awarding the contract. The Bidder agrees that the proposal will remain firm for a period of one hundred twenty (120) calendar days after the date specified for receipt of proposals or until a sub-recipient agreement is fully executed.

The Bidder selected is a sub-recipient of a Federal award and thus are required to follow the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200).

Each Bidder, by submitting its proposal, authorizes EPG to release to the State of Maryland information concerning the Bidder's Maryland taxes, unemployment compensation, workers’ compensation liabilities, and total compensations for individuals charged to the subrecipient agreement.

The Bidder has arrived at the cost(s) and amount(s) in its proposal independently and without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other Bidder or potential Bidder. The Bidder shall not disclose any of these items on or before the proposal submission deadline specified in this RFP.

The Bidder has not attempted, nor will it attempt, to induce any firm or person to refrain from submitting a proposal on this sub-recipient agreement, or to submit a proposal higher than this proposal, or to submit any intentionally high or noncompetitive proposal or other form of complementary proposal.

The Bidder has not made, under separate sub-recipient agreement with EPG, any recommendations to the Issuing Office concerning the need for the goods and services described in its proposal or the specifications for the goods and services described in the proposal.

The Bidder is not currently under suspension or debarment in the State of Maryland, any other State or the Federal government and, if the Bidder cannot so certify, then it shall submit along with its proposal a written explanation of why it cannot make such certification (2 CFR 200.213).

The Bidder must clearly identify and describe the services being offered in response to this RFP. Bidders are cautioned that the organization, as well as the thoroughness of the response, is critical to the evaluation process.

The Bidder’s Proposal forms must be legible and complete in their entirety, with all required supplemental information presented in an organized, comprehensive, and easy-to-follow manner.

EPG is not liable for any costs the Bidder incurs in preparation and submission of its proposal, in participating in the RFP process, or in anticipation of award of the sub-recipient agreement.

EPG reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by the Bidder proves the Bidder is not qualified to carry out the obligations of the RFP and to complete the Project as specified.
EPG may make investigations (including on-site visits and contacting any or all references) as deemed necessary, to determine that the Bidder’s competence, number of qualified employees, business organization, and financial resources are adequate to perform per the RFP.

To the best knowledge of the person signing the proposal for the Bidder, the Bidder, its affiliates, subsidiaries, officers, directors, and employees are not currently under investigation by any governmental agency and have not been convicted or found liable for any act prohibited by State or Federal law in any jurisdiction, involving conspiracy or collusion with respect to bidding or proposing on any public contract, except as the Bidder has disclosed in its proposal.

To the best knowledge of the person signing the proposal for the Bidder and unless the Bidder has otherwise disclosed in its proposal, the Bidder has no outstanding, delinquent obligations including, but not limited to, any Federal and State tax liabilities not being contested on appeal or other obligation of the Bidder that is owed.

Until the selected Bidder receives a fully executed and approved written sub-recipient agreement from the Issuing Office, there is no legal and valid sub-recipient agreement, in law or in equity. EPG reserves the right to vary or change the terms of any sub-recipient agreement executed as a result of this RFP, including funding levels, the scope of work, performance standards, and shortening or extending the sub-recipient agreement period, as it deems necessary in the interest of the Board and its programs, pending availability of funds.

The fully executed Agreement will require the selected Bidder to assume responsibility for all goods and services offered in its proposal whether it produces them itself or through subcontract. Additionally, if the Bidder uses any subcontractor, the proposal should be clear on the roles, responsibilities, and outcomes of each. The substitution of one subcontractor for another must be made at the discretion and prior written approval of the Issuing Office. EPG considers the selected Bidder to be the sole point of contact regarding all contractual matters.

Bidders shall not issue press releases, internet postings, advertisements or any other public communications pertaining to this Project without prior written approval of the Issuing Office, and then only in coordination with the Issuing Office.