

Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, Inc.
249 Thomaston Avenue
Waterbury, CT 06702

REGIONAL SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Proposal due date:
December 4, 2023



**NORTHWEST REGIONAL
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

FIRST JOB | NEXT JOB | BEST JOB

Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board

Program Year 2023-2024 Request for Proposal (RFP)

Regional Sector Partnerships Curriculum Development

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Release Date: November 7, 2023
Bidders Conference Call: November 20, 2023, at 11:00AM VIA Zoom below

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87802784090?pwd=SjaktXzlHEa7a92ICkWaPnehbB965b.1>

Meeting ID: 878 0278 4090

Passcode: 081582

Proposal Deadline: December 4, 2023, 4:00pm
Electronic submission: Patrick.Donnely@nrwib.org
Subject: RSP Curriculum
Development Response

PROPOSAL CONTACT PERSON:

Patrick Donnelly, Director of Workforce Programs

Email: Patrick.Donnely@nrwib.org

Phone: 203-574-6971 x 461

Fax: 203-573-8951

SECTION I: PURPOSE

The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) is seeking a vendor capable of developing evidence-based, researched, and reviewed curriculum and instructional materials in the Manufacturing and/or Healthcare sectors. Qualified vendors should have a demonstrated capacity and established methods of developing curriculum for learners in a professional setting, developing evaluation plans, and implementing train-the trainer models. This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks curriculum developers or providers who share a vision for ensuring that all NRWIB student clients have access to the highest quality instructional resources designed by and for manufacturing and/or healthcare industries. The goal is to increase student achievement through the attainment of recognized credentials, ensuring successful careers upon training completion.

Proposals should outline a plan to accomplish this goal which includes a timeline, cost, and deliverables. This RFP includes background information regarding the Northwest Manufacturing and Healthcare Regional Sector Partnerships (RSPs) and describes the purpose of the design, its desired functionality, and specific requests relating to the proposal. We understand that details may be subject to change upon vendor recommendation and / or research of more optimal solutions. In your proposal, please feel free to suggest alternatives as appropriate.

Curriculum Ownership

The Contractor shall at all times recognize the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) as the sole owner of the developed curriculum. As the sole owner, the NRWIB shall at all times have complete control over the access, use, disclosure, and disposition of the information and all related materials.

A bidder's conference will be held on November 20, 2023, at 11:00 AM via Zoom to address any questions or comments. To register for the bidders' conference, email Nina Lombardi at nina.lombardi@nrwib.org with the subject line "Registration for RSP Curriculum Development Bidders' Conference." Additional questions will be accepted until November 27, 2023, at 4pm, and can be submitted via email to: Patrick.Donnelly@nrwib.org.

Organization Background

The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) and Regional Sector Partnerships (RSPs) promote business growth by convening and partnering with businesses, training and education providers, labor, and diverse community stakeholders to support an inclusive and dynamic regional economy. Developing and maintaining a high-quality workforce is critical to attracting and retaining business in Connecticut.

Sector Partnerships

Manufacturers and healthcare industry experts come together to define a shared agenda based on the priorities that most impact the vitality and competitiveness of their industry—not the agenda of public programs. In a Regional Sector Partnership, business leaders drive the action by personally championing priorities and volunteering on task teams to push for outcomes and results. The NW CT Regional Sector Partnerships are also community-supported and rely on a coordinated team of public support partners, including those from the workforce development,

economic development, and education sectors, who work together to respond to industry needs. The partnership acts as a "shared table" for business leaders to collaborate with a range of public partners and for public partners to work together to align programs to industry needs. Since Regional Sector Partnerships are organized around the topic that interests business leaders most (that being "what it takes" to ensure that their company thrives,) they are sustainable over time.

Project Overview

The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating career pathways for adults and youth through in-demand workforce and training programs. The Regional Sector Partnerships, a collaborative initiative under the NRWIB, are partnerships of businesses, from within the same industry and operating in a shared labor market region, who work with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations to address workforce and other competitive needs of the targeted industry. A strong focus of these partnerships is identifying and designing short-term certificate programs targeting entry-level healthcare and manufacturing careers, with the opportunity to upskill on high-quality career pathways, resulting in expanded healthcare and manufacturing industry pipelines.

In this RFP, Curricular and Instructional Materials are defined to be the comprehensive curriculum and materials needed for the total instructional experience for learners in every classroom, aligned to related Industry Standards. The Board expects that learning will be enhanced by adherence to a curriculum that promotes continuity and cumulative acquisition and application of skills and knowledge in the related sector.

Scope of Work

The curriculum should be developed in collaboration with, led by, and for industry experts, and should wholistically address the growth and development of learners, the needs of both the learners and the employers, the desires of the industry sector employers and the community. All curricula should lead to industry recognized and potentially nationally accredited, certifications as may be applicable. The focus of the curriculum shall promote:

- An opportunity for every student to participate;
- Objectives derived from local, state, national, and international standards as appropriate in all subject areas;
- Provision of curriculum in a hybrid learning environment.
- The curriculum shall provide instructors and students with industry's expectations of skills students should will have command of upon completion of each course;
- Written curriculum frameworks, scopes and sequences, expectations, curriculum guides, and material -shall be developed for each subject area with course content;
- Instructional resources such as textbooks, software, electronic resources, and other materials and learning tools shall be selected based upon their alignment with the curriculum standards. Industry approval of the curriculum framework will be required prior to the implementation of the selected Curricular and Instructional Materials in all learning environments and prior to the and the execution of any Agreement for the provision of such services;

- Respondents who publish multiple products or programs should submit separate proposals for each industry sector program;

All curriculum developed should include:

- Curriculum and Facilitators Guide
- Trainers' toolkit (workbooks, resources, videos, etc.)
- Evaluation plan to evaluate the impact of curriculum.
- Designed for online, in-person and/or asynchronous learning.

Vendor(s) should conduct a review of other similar curricula/trainings available.

The Contractor will:

- By Month 1 and throughout the project:
 - Provide summary of other similar curriculum/training available and an overview of proposed curriculum.
 - Set schedule of at least 2x per month meetings with NRWIB staff and key RSP industry partners to provide support, status update, and receive feedback.
- By Month 3:
 - In consultation with the NRWIB staff and key RSP industry partners, provide a draft of designed curriculum, toolkit, and evaluation plan.
- By Month 5:
 - Host a pilot session of developed modules (delivery method based on curricula design).
 - Make required edits based on pilot feedback.
- By Month 7
 - In consultation with the NRWIB staff and key RSP industry partners, hand-off designed curriculum, toolkit, and evaluation plan.
 - Train-the-trainer for the NRWIB and key RSP industry partner staff

THIS TIMELINE IS SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION

SECTION II: GENERAL RFP PROCESS AND PROCEDURES ELIGIBLE PROPOSERS

Eligible Proposers

All organizations interested in and capable of providing curriculum development services.

SECTION III: CONTRACT PERIOD AND CONTRACT PERFORMANCE

Providers who do not substantially meet the NRWIB’s performance standards applicable as described in the contract document will not be renewed.

Contracts will be written for one year with the possibility of a one-year renewable period. Renewal will be the option of the NRWIB. Contracts will contain additional clauses related to termination for convenience with the proper notice to provide for contractors not wishing to continue services beyond any one-year period. Performance will be measured each year.

SECTION IV: PROPOSAL APPLICATION CRITERIA AND INSTRUCTIONS

1. Who May Apply

Proposer(s) may be public or private not-for-profit corporations, local educational agencies, business and/or trade associations, private for-profit corporations, community-based organizations, labor organizations and governmental units including municipalities. Minority and women owned businesses are encouraged to submit proposals.

Entities must have been in business in the United States for at least two (2) years prior to submission of an application. If proposer(s) is a foreign corporation (not a CT Corporation) they must have a certificate from the CT Secretary of State showing that they have filed the necessary documents to do business in this state.

2. Accessing the RFP Document and Attachments

Interested parties may access the RFP from the website <https://www.nrwib.org/admin-hub>, under the RFP/RFQ section. Interested parties are responsible for checking the website for additions, modifications, and questions and answers concerning this RFP. The NRWIB will not contact proposers individually or respond to questions on an individual basis. All questions received will be posted on the website along with the answers.

3. Due Dates– All dates are subject to change by NRWIB

EVENT	DATE/TIME
RFP Issued to the Public	November 7, 2023
Bidder’s Conference (not mandatory)	November 20, 2023 @ 11:00 a.m. VIA Zoom
Deadline for Proposal Submission	December 4, 2023 @ 4:00 p.m.

- a. Proposals must be submitted on or before 4:00 p.m., December 4, 2023.

Proposals shall be submitted via email to Patrick.Donnelly@nrwib.org. The subject line must read- RSP Curriculum Development Response. One copy shall be in Word format and the second must be a PDF version.

NRWIB shall not be held responsible for proposer's failure to meet responsiveness, date, time, and submission deadlines.

All submissions should be marked: RSP Curriculum Development Response

4. The RFP Response Package

- a. The RFP Response package consists of the completion of the Proposal Application and budget.
- b. Please submit one complete application in a Word version and a second in the PDF format.
- c. The Proposal must contain the original signature (electronic acceptable) of the designated agent officially authorized to act as the contractual agent for the organization affixed to each document where a signature is required.

5. Inquiries, Questions and Updates to the Proposal

All updates or modifications to the Proposal Requirements will be posted on the NRWIB website. All questions regarding this RFP should be posted to the NRWIB website. Questions are generally answered within two (2) business days or sooner if possible.

Questions arising at the Bidder's Conference will be posted on NRWIB website.

Questions will be accepted through November 27, 2023, at 4pm. The NRWIB will not respond individually to questions or send out updates on an individual basis. It is the proposer's **responsibility to visit the website to access this information.**

6. Cure Process

NRWIB has established a discretionary cure process to cure minor omissions in submitted proposals within forty-eight (48) hours of notification by the NRWIB via email to the proposer's contact named in the application. Failure to provide the requested information within the allotted time shall result in a "fatal flaw." This process is provided by NRWIB as a courtesy, and as such, NRWIB is not responsible for notification of any omissions or errors in any documentation submitted by the applicant agency in response to the RFP.

All applying agencies are solely responsible for contact availability via e-mail during this cure period and failure to receive NRWIB notification of cure issues is not subject to appeal.

Minor inconsistencies or revisions may be addressed during the negotiation process, at the sole and complete discretion of NRWIB.

7. Selection Criteria

- a. Proposals may not be funded at the funding levels requested.

- b. The NRWIB reserves the right, at its sole and complete discretion, to invite proposer(s) to make a presentation. NRWIB also reserves the right, at its discretion, to conduct pre-selection site visits to any organization that is being considered for funding under this solicitation.
- c. Proposals will be reviewed by staff for responsiveness and substance.
- d. Proposer(s) are advised not to contact NRWIB employees, board members or elected officials charged with oversight of these programs during the review process to avoid conflicts, the appearance of conflicts, or undue influence over the process. This could result in the disqualification of the proposal response submitted.

8. Administrative Requirements

Contracts written during the renewal periods as a result of this RFP will be subject to negotiation of expected performance for each year the contract is in effect.

- a. Proposer(s) must be able to demonstrate the necessary administrative capability and fiscal responsibility needed to operate the program proposed and to meet federal financial accountability requirements. Proposer's organization may be subject to a pre-award review. This may include, but not be limited to, a review of proposer(s) record keeping procedures, management systems, accounting and administrative systems, training facilities, and curriculum.
- b. Any proposer(s), after a pre-award survey that is determined by NRWIB to not have the fiscal capability to manage the grant funds will be required to post a performance bond, or may be rejected as a provider at the discretion of NRWIB. The cost of the bond cannot be charged to the project proposed. NRWIB reserves the right to review budgets to determine the fiscal capacity of the proposer(s) and may deem a proposal non-responsive if proposer(s) cannot demonstrate fiscal capacity through staffing sufficient to be able to deliver the program proposed and separation of duties sufficient to safeguard the integrity of the funds.
- c. All organizations funded whether public or private, commercial or not-for-profit, receiving at least \$750,000.00 annually through federal grants regardless of the funding source will be required to conduct and submit an annual audit. Funds may not be included in the budget for an annual audit if proposer does not receive at least \$750,000.00 of federal funds annually.
- d. All media advertisements, collateral and printed material used in the promotion of the program, recruitment of participants, and published reports must name NRWIB as the grantor agency and must be approved in advance of publication by the NRWIB Executive Director. The time necessary to obtain the appropriate approvals must be considered when developing materials or other media advertisements.
- e. Proposer(s) must agree to cooperate with and provide such information as may be requested by NRWIB for purposes of filing reports with the State and the NRWIB Governing Boards.
- f. This RFP does not commit or obligate NRWIB to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation of a response or in advance of the execution of a contract.
- g. Implementation of this program may not occur prior to the start date of the contract document.

- h. Proposer(s) whose main headquarters are located out of the workforce area and who maintain their books and records outside of the workforce area must specify in their proposal how they will make their books and records accessible to the NRWIB for monitoring and audit purposes. It will not be sufficient to state that NRWIB may visit contractor's site, the records must be available to the NRWIB in its workforce area. Failure to do so may result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive.
- i. Proposer must agree to be trained in the State of Connecticut participant data entry system. Proposer(s) may not include the costs of any custom or proprietary information technology system in their budgets.
- j. NRWIB will not pay for the maintenance of duplicate MIS systems or proprietary assessment systems owned by proposer or a related company such as an affiliate or subsidiary.
- k. In the event of a conflict or ambiguity between the rules, terms, and conditions set forth in the RFP and the statutes, laws, State policies and regulations, the statutes, laws, State policies and regulations shall prevail. NRWIB shall be responsible for making all determinations in this regard.
- l. Proposer(s) will assure that all records pertaining to this agreement, including financial, statistical, property, and supporting documentation, shall be retained for a period of six (6) years from the date of: 1) final payment of under this agreement, and 2) when all audits and litigation are complete and resolved.

9. Progress Reports

Proposer(s) will be required to evaluate their progress, and report to the NRWIB on a monthly and annual basis in accordance with a report format to be provided by the NRWIB.

10. The Agreement Type and Budget

- a. All contracts negotiated as a result of this RFP will be cost reimbursement. This is a contract format wherein all allowable costs detailed in the budget attached to the executed contract are reimbursed upon submission of documentation, which substantiates the expenditures. Allowable means allowable under both the grant funding stream supporting the contract expenditures and the executed contract.
- b. Initial contracts will be written for the program year beginning January, 2024, and subsequent renewals may be written for two (2) one (1) year periods beginning January, 2025, following the first year based upon performance. Renewal will be the option of the NRWIB Governing Board. Contracts will contain additional clauses related to termination for convenience with the proper notice to provide for contractors not wishing to continue services beyond any one-year period. Performance will be measured each year.
- c. Proposers must complete the budget section of the proposal using the forms provided. RFP responses which do not include the budget forms will be deemed non-responsive. The Budget is part of the RFP response and can be downloaded from the NRWIB website at <https://www.nrwib.org/admin-hub>, under the RFP/RFQ section. Paper copies will not be available.

- d. All costs, including profit if applicable, salaries and merit increases, are subject to negotiation as a part of the contracting process. NRWIB will compare salaries and other costs proposed with costs and salaries for similar positions and responsibilities in its workforce area in arriving at reasonable negotiated costs. The federal government has imposed salary caps based upon the federal executive level II position levels. Salaries reimbursed or partially reimbursed under contracts funded as a result of this RFP may not exceed the federal salary cap.
- e. Travel outside of the NRWIB workforce development area must be described and justified in the proposal and included in the budget along with details regarding the need for travel, the number of persons who will be traveling, and the length of the stay. NRWIB shall determine the reasonableness of the travel during negotiations. All in and out of workforce area travel will be subject to NRWIB mileage rates, travel rules, and procedures unless the proposer's policies and procedures have been reviewed and approved by NRWIB.
- f. No equipment purchases are allowed. Leasing arrangements for property or staff must be competitively procured and approved during negotiation of the contract.
- g. Lease agreements may not be from proposer or proposer's organization or from a subsidiary, or related company or corporation unless they are leased to the general public at the same price as offered under this RFP.

11. Cost Parameters

- a. It is a policy of NRWIB not to provide advance payments. Proposals seeking advances will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed or rated. If a Proposer approved for funding later identifies the need for an advance the NRWIB will not be able to proceed to contract execution. Invoices are paid once a month. Proposer(s) must be able to support the cost of the program until they are reimbursed, which typically takes thirty (30) days from the date a clean invoice is submitted. Payment of invoices submitted without the proper documentation may be delayed. NRWIB does not pay defective or incomplete invoices.
- b. Supplies and/or materials proposed may not be purchased from proposer(s) or proposer(s) organization or from a subsidiary, or related company or corporation unless they are sold to the general public at the same price as offered under this RFP. Budget items, which are proprietary in nature, must be broken down into a cost reimbursement format.
- c. NRWIB cannot reimburse providers for interest charges associated with the establishment of credit lines. The Office of Management and Budget Circulars applicable to grants prohibit interest payments as follows: "Costs incurred for interest on borrowed capital, temporary use of endowment funds, or the use of the non-profit organization's own funds however represented are unallowable."
- d. Any and all work performed or expenses involved in the preparation and submission of proposals shall be borne by the applicant(s). No payment will be made for any efforts or expenses prior to commencement of work as defined by a fully executed contract.

13. Subcontracts

Subcontracts are allowed; however, the original awardee will be responsible for all reporting.

14. Grievance and Procedures

In the event a proposer(s) wishes to file a grievance in connection with the process, a grievance procedure is available and may be obtained from the NRWIB Administrative Offices. Grievances related to this proposal must be filed in writing within the time frames stated in the NRWIB grievance policy.

15. Conflict of Interest

All applicants must disclose the name of any officer, director or employee who is a member of the NRWIB governing boards or an employee of NRWIB. All applicants must disclose the name of any NRWIB employee who owns, directly or indirectly, any interest in the applicants' business or any of its branches. Such disclosure must be submitted in a separate letter included with the Application for Business Services and Employer Engagement, no later than the proposal deadline.

16. Interference with the Procurement Process

Applicants are hereby advised that, the NRWIB will not award funding to an organization, person, or entity which has hired a person, whether directly or indirectly, or consented to or acquiesced in the employment of a person, whose principal responsibility is to lobby a member of the NRWIB, Inc. or the NRWIB Elected Officials on behalf of the organization, person, or entity which seeks funding from the NRWIB.

Any applicant or lobbyist for an applicant, paid or unpaid, is prohibited from having any private communication concerning any procurement process or any response to a procurement process with any NRWIB staff or rating committee members after the issuance of a funding opportunity and until completion of a contract award. A proposal from any organization will be disqualified if the applicant or a lobbyist for the applicant, paid or unpaid, violates this condition of the procurement process.

17. Compliance

The proposer(s) will fully comply with the applicable requirements of the Acts through which funds are received. It will comply with applicable directives issued by the Connecticut Department of Labor, the Connecticut Department of Social Services as it applies to JFES funds, or other appropriate state department(s). The proposer assures that it will comply with other federal statutes applicable to this agreement.

18. NRWIB Right to Reject or Accept

NRWIB retains the right to accept, modify, reject entirely, or partially reject any and all proposals if, in its judgment, the work proposed will not accomplish the objectives of this project or does not meet all of the requirements of this Request for Proposal