Career Pathways II Questions and Answers

Question 1: On the "Grant Opportunity Portal - Grant Opportunity Profile" it states Governmental Entities are eligible applicants but on page 6 of the announcement, "Only non-profit community based organizations are eligible to apply". Are Local WIBs eligible to apply? Are public school districts eligible to apply as the lead agency?

Answer: Effective August 1, 2013, if you are a not-for-profit organization, you are required to be pre-qualified to do business with New York State. However, this is not a guarantee of an award and legislation governing the funding may further stipulate who is eligible to apply for any given funding opportunity. In the case of Career Pathways II, the RFP requires the lead applicant agency to be a non-profit community-based organization as specified in the appropriation language included in the State Budget. Therefore, a non-profit WIB or a non-profit One Stop Operator that operates in the community and directly provides program services to residents of that community would meet the definition of an eligible applicant for Career Pathways II. Government agencies, such as BOCES, public school districts or community colleges are not eligible to apply as a lead agency, but certainly would be an appropriate partner agency.

Question 2: In reviewing the RFP, it appears that only non-profits can apply and a local district Social Services cannot apply, but must be included in the process and application. Is this correct?

Answer: Yes; only non-profit community-based organizations are eligible to apply for funding under this initiative. An applicant's proposal must be developed in consultation with the local social services district and obtain the signed Social Services Partnership Form by the submission deadline. NYC applicants are required to submit these requests to the Commissioner/Administrator and Grants Officer in the Financial Office of the Human Resources Administration (HRA) three weeks prior to the date the letter is required. HRA also requires applicants to submit a completed or partial proposal and a one page summary of their proposal.

Question 3: How much is available for funding? On the "Grant Opportunity Portal - Grant Opportunity Profile" it states a total of $3 million in funding but on page 5 of the announcement it states $2 million.

Answer: $2 million is available for the first year of funding. Funding for additional years is subject to availability.

Question 4: In the body of the proposal page 19 – Technical Proposal it states, "The program narrative should not exceed 10 pages". However, attachment 5, page 53 states "12 page Maximum in 12 inch pitch font." Is it 10 or 12 max? Can non-required supporting documents be sent along with the proposal submission, such as letters of support/partnership from employers and other partners?

Answer: The proposal should be no longer than 10 pages. Attachments are not included towards the total page count.

Question 5: Based on the distribution of funding in the RFP, and desire to serve multiple regions, are they anticipating lower than $300K requests? Is there an average request they are anticipating?

Answer: Bidders may request up to $300,000. Applicant agencies should apply for the funding amount that best meets their needs.

Question 6: In your priority criteria, you mention comparing the service area's unemployment rate to that of the economic region and provide the 2012 unemployment figures for each region. For the service area, should we also use December 2012 unemployment rates, or the most recent?

Answer: Attachment B13 lists the most recently available average unemployment rates by region. This information is also available on the Department of Labor's website.

Question 7: Is there a cash match or leveraging funds requirement for this grant?

Answer: No, there is no match associated with this program.

Question 8: Must the Social Services District Partnership forms and local Workforce Investment Board forms accompany the proposals, or can we have our LSSD and WIB submit the form directly to OTDA?

Answer: These forms are required to be submitted with your proposal. Please refer to page 35 of the RFP for a listing of forms that are required to be submitted with the RFP.

Question 9: If there is an organization in the primary county that we will serve who currently has a Career Pathways grant, will that decrease our chances of receiving an award? Is an organization that currently holds a Career Pathways grant ineligible to participate as a partner on an application?

Answer: Organizational experience and past performance are factors in evaluation, but are not the sole criteria. Existing Career Pathways contracts end on January 31, 2014. Current Career Pathways providers are not precluded from submitting an application.

Question 10: On page 71, Chemung, Steuben, and Schuyler counties are not listed under any of the DOL Labor Markets. Is there a reason for this?

Answer: The Labor Market Analyst for the Southern Tier is Christian Harris. He is located at the NYS Department of Labor, 2001 Perimeter Road E., Suite 3, Endicott, NY 13760.
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Question 11: The RFP states that applicants are encouraged to submit proposals using a regional based approach in an effort to serve participants in more than one county. We are located in Rochester and have affiliate organizations across NYS; can we submit a joint application with our Western NY affiliate?

Answer: It would be possible if you can demonstrate both areas have an average unemployment rate which exceeds the average annual unemployment rate for its region. The training programs offered would have to be verified by your LWIB as demand occupations. Any organization seeking to serve more than one region must submit a separate application for each region.

Question 12: The RFP states that each proposal must be sent in a single sealed envelope. It also states that there must be 5 copies with original signatures. Are all of the copies to be mailed with the original in one envelope or in separate envelopes?

Answer: All copies of a proposal are to be submitted in one envelope.

Question 13: Must prospective grantees have their training courses listed on the NYSDOL ETP site prior to application, or is it acceptable to list them as pending ETP approval in the proposal as long as they will be listed by the time of an award?

Answer: You must have Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) approval of your proposed training offerings at the time you submit your application. Most, but not all, training offerings will be listed on the ETP site. Regardless of inclusion on the ETP website, agencies are required to include all training offerings they intend to provide on attachment B12, LWIB Approval Form, approved by your LWIB and submitted as part of the funding application.

Question 14: We would like to propose a Career Pathways program that will serve young adults, 18 to 24, at one location, and will serve older adults at a separate location (both locations in Brooklyn, New York). Would it be permissible to conduct a Career Pathways program at two separate locations? Is it permissible to propose two program models for serving two different populations, i.e., one program model for serving young adults, 18 to 24, and a second program model for serving older adults? Would this be a viable proposal? We would like to submit more than one proposal in response to this RFP. Is it permissible to do so?

Answer: As your agency is considered one NYC entity, you should submit only one proposal which may offer Career Pathways services at more than one location. Keep in mind that individuals age 18 and up to 24 (under 24) are the primary target population. Older adults may only be served if they are in receipt of public assistance, specifically Family Assistance (FA) or Safety Net Assistance (SNA). At least 60% of the funds shall be used to serve 18 to 24 year olds. The remaining 40% may be used to serve FA or SNA recipients without age restrictions and 16 to 17 year old self-supporting heads of household who meet the TANF 200% of poverty requirements.

Question 15: Will consideration be given to organizations focusing on specific populations of unemployed/underemployed New Yorkers with documented skills and earnings gaps (e.g. women and single mothers) assuming the population is substantial enough to yield robust participation and milestone performance? Can applicants target their services to specific subpopulations of otherwise eligible individuals (such as formerly incarcerated individuals)?

Answer: The primary populations to be served are unemployed or underemployed individuals 18 to 24 years of age, public assistance recipients, including FA and SNA who are eligible for TANF services, or 16 and 17 year old self-supporting heads of household who met the TANF 200% of federal poverty guidelines. Proposals may focus on certain specific populations so long as those served also meet the Career Pathways target population requirements. Subpopulations such as formerly incarcerated individuals may also be served but they must meet the aforementioned criteria.

Question 16: Must the 18-24 year olds served through funded programs meet TANF parent/caretaker requirements, or is it sufficient that they meet the 200% of poverty income requirements only?

Answer: Individuals age 18 to 24 (under 24 at the time of certification) must meet TANF eligibility requirements, including that the household gross monthly income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level and must meet TANF certification requirements, as outlined in 00-LCM-20, regarding income, residency and citizenship. However, individuals in this age group may participate in the Career Pathways program without regard to having a minor child.

Question 17: Programs engaging harder to serve populations facing high barriers to employment may expect to place fewer clients in employment than programs serving a general population of eligible individuals. Is there a minimum expectation for % of participants that programs are expected to place in employment? Will OTDA account for this discrepancy in making funding determinations?

Answer: No, there is no minimum expectation for the percent of participants to be placed in employment but remember that employment is the goal of the Career Pathways program and employment retention is considered in application scoring. Agencies should strive to meet the job retention goals established as part of your proposal.

Question 18: The RFP states that the District may provide support services to facilitate participation. What specific supports will/can the District provide? Does the District specifically fund childcare for parents participating in the Career Pathways II services? Is it possible to accept referrals from sources other than the district?

Answer: The supportive services a social services district may provide depends on a number of factors, including whether the PA recipient is approved by the district to participate in an activity, such as vocational training. You are responsible for coordinating participation for each PA recipient in your program and cooperating with any attendance requirements. Districts are required to provide childcare or other support services necessary for a public assistance recipient to participate in a district-required work activity. Social services district-provided child care for other low-income individuals is subject to funding availability and local program criteria. For these reasons and others, coordination with the district is advisable.

Career Pathways program providers may also accept referrals from other sources. Keep in mind that if the individual referred from another source is a PA recipient, the Career Pathways provider is still required to consult with your local district.

Question 19: If an organization is serving the same age group to provide increasing grade level in education, earning their high school diploma (GED)/Certificate and/or securing a job; but there are no retention services associated with the program. Can we transition individuals to Career Pathways after the other program ends?

Answer: No, retention milestones under the Career Pathways program may only be claimed for individuals who have been placed in a job following a Career Plan Plus 60 Instructional Hours milestone, as part of the Career Pathways program.

Question 20: Credentials are budgeted on Attachment B-6 at $1,750, which is the second-to-highest value one can earn for a PA recipient's achievement of a credential (Level 3). Yet the first footnote on page 54 states that this is the "highest reimbursement value." In fact, $2,250 for a Level 4 credential is the highest value. Which amount should the applicant use in making the calculations on page 54?

Answer: Your budget will be scored based on the number of credentials proposed at the highest level. Please use the revised reimbursement schedule on the final pages of this document and located at http://otda.ny.gov . Page 24 of the RFP should read as follows:

- The following formulas will be used to assign cost points.

    - Credential *(C) = 10 points
      (Low C Bid ÷ C Bid Being Evaluated) x 10 points = Points Earned

    - 120-Day Job Retention (JR) = 10 points
      (Low JR Bid ÷ JR Bid Being Evaluated) x 10 points = Points Earned

*Level 4 Equivalent

Also consider the examples given below.

Agency A offers only Security Guard training, a program which requires less than 60 instructional hours for completion. In order to come up with a milestone goal, they would need to calculate as follows. It is projected that 27 participants will achieve this milestone. 27 *$750 = $20,250. $20,250/$2,250 = 9, which is the number that should be entered in the Credential goal line on the reimbursement schedule.

Agency B offers only High School Equivalency Diplomas, which require more than 240 instructional hours for completion. They project 15 participants will achieve this milestone. 15* $2,250 = $33,750. $33,750/$2,250 = 15. The budgets would be scored based on 9 and 15 credentials, respectively.

Question 21: On page 54, the Job Entry and Job Retention Milestone are said to "be added together for planning purposes." But it seems strange to multiply Job Entries by $3,250 given that we know one will earn $1,250 maximum for this. Please clarify the methodology for us.

Answer: For budget proposal preparation purposes, the highest milestone value is used to determine the proposed milestone goal. Applicant organizations should be aware that if selected for an award, additional job entries and retentions would be needed in order to earn all the funds associated with this milestone as any of the jobs obtained by participants did not pay enough to meet the $3,250 level. Please see chart on page 13 of the RFP.

Question 22: Can you please define the milestone for "job entry"? Is there a retention limit associated with this milestone? (Page 14 of RFP)

Answer: The job entry milestone is achieved on "day one". A participant would need to complete the career plan plus 60 instructional hours milestone and obtain and begin unsubsidized employment.

Question 23: Are grantees to wait until the end of each grant year prior to submitting for reimbursement for milestones achieved by participants? If not, when are milestone reimbursements to be submitted to OTDA?

Answer: Vouchers are to be submitted on a quarterly basis. Selected providers will receive voucher instructions upon execution of their contract.

Question 24: The RFP gives 2 different milestone values for PA and non-PA recipient clients. Is PA or non-PA status determined by the client's status at intake, or at the time the milestone was achieved

(e.g. if a client goes off of PA when they are placed in a job but was on PA at intake, would the provider be paid for 60 and 120 retention milestones at the PA or non-PA level?

Answer: Eligibility should be established upon intake. For PA recipients, documentation can be either a Welfare Management System (WMS) printout or a district referral form/letter. For 18 to 24 year olds or 16 and 17 year old self-supporting heads of household who meet 200% of federal poverty requirements, a completed TANF Services Application/Certification Form and TANF Review Form must be completed by you. If a participant goes off PA based on employment, the provider would be paid at the PA level. The eligibility period is one year. If the participant remains in your program for longer than one year, you would need to re-establish eligibility for your program.

Question 25: For the 60 instructional hours that clients must participate in for the "Career Plan plus 60 instructional hours milestone," can activities such as directed job search completed in an onsite computer lab or in-office development of resume with guidance from program staff count towards the 60 hours? Can the job training hours and the retention days overlap, such as in the instance of on-the-job training?

Answer: The 60 hours may be comprised of education related to employment, high school diploma preparation, job readiness training or job skills training. Directed job search and in-office development of a resume would constitute allowable job readiness/job search activities. Work experience and employment are also countable for up to 30 hours, when combined with education, job skills or job readiness services.

Question 26: Do job placements have to be in the sectors of the individual's training?

Answer: While the goal of the Career Pathways program is to assist participants in finding employment in their approved career pathway, if an individual obtains a job in a field other than what they were training for that meets established earnings requirements as outlined on page 14 of the RFP, a milestone may be claimed. Programs are expected to have a strategy in place to help individuals find work in the field for which they were trained.

Question 27: Being a milestone reimbursable grant, does the funding need to be expended in the same calendar year in which it is generated?

Answer: No, milestones must be claimed within the program contract period. However, keep in mind vouchers should be submitted at least quarterly and OTDA will monitor performance and reserves the right to reduce awards or terminate low performing projects.

Question 28: How will this program be audited?

Answer: A full desk audit will be conducted with each voucher submission. This requires supporting documentation for each milestone claimed to be submitted with each voucher payment. Periodic site visits will also be held to review program services and client eligibility. Additional information will be given to selected providers upon the execution of their contract.

Question 29: Is the M/WBE requirement 20% of the total request, or 20% of eligible expenses not related to staff salary?

Answer: For the purposes of this solicitation, OTDA hereby establishes an overall goal of 20% for MWBE participation, 10% for Minority-Owned Business Enterprise ("MBE") participation and 10% for Women-Owned Business Enterprise ("WBE") participation, based on the current availability of qualified MBEs and WBEs. The calculation is based on the discretionary line items.

Question 30: In past state RFPs, we have usually seen a MWBE requirement waiver form that we have been able to complete if we believe we have a justification for not being able to meet the requirement (for example, the proposal funds would be primarily used to support services provided by staff). We did not see a similar form in this proposal package. Is it still possible to submit a waiver for part or all of the MWBE subcontracting requirement?

Answer: No, it is no longer possible to obtain a waiver of the MWBE requirement. See question 29 regarding how the standard is applied.

Career Pathways II
Reimbursement Schedule

(1) Milestone Category	(2) Milestone Goal	(3) Milestone Value	(4) Total Funds By Category (2) x (3)
Career Plan Plus 60 Instructional Hours		$1,250	$
Credential		$2,250	$
Job Entry		$1,250	$
Job Retention (60 Days)		$3,250	$
Job Retention (120 Days)		$3,250	$
Total Milestone Reimbursement			$

* Although the reimbursement values vary for the credential milestone achieved, for planning purposes, agencies should estimate the number of milestones to be achieved at the highest reimbursement value ($2,250 for Job Skills Training over 240 instructional hours, high school diploma, TASC, secondary school diploma, associate's or bachelor's degree).

** Although the reimbursement values vary for job entry and retention milestones based on average weekly earnings, for planning purposes, agencies should estimate the number of milestones to be achieved at the highest reimbursement value ($3,250 for jobs with average earnings above $360.)

Career Pathways II
Projected 5 Year Reimbursement Schedule

(1) Milestone Category	(2) Milestone Goal	(3) Milestone Value	(4) Total Funds By Category (2) x (3)
Career Plan Plus 60 Instructional Hours		$1,250	$
Credential		$2,250	$
Job Entry		$1,250	$
Job Retention (60 Days)		$3,250	$
Job Retention (120 Days)		$3,250	$
Total Milestone Reimbursement			$

* Although the reimbursement values vary for the credential milestone achieved, for planning purposes, agencies should estimate the number of milestones to be achieved at the highest reimbursement value ($2,250 for Job Skills Training over 240 instructional hours, high school diploma, TASC, secondary school diploma, associate's or bachelor's degree).

** Although the reimbursement values vary for job entry and retention milestones based on average weekly earnings, for planning purposes, agencies should estimate the number of milestones to be achieved at the highest reimbursement value ($3,250 for jobs with average earnings above $360.)