

**Contract for Professional Services**

**Request for Qualifications**

**Regional Plan Development**

**Purpose of the Request for Qualifications:**

As part of the implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Central Illinois Economic Development Region is issuing a Request for Qualifications for a consultant to assist with regional plan development for a 15-county area, which includes: Cass, Menard, Logan, Macon, Scott, Morgan, Sangamon, Christian, Shelby, Greene, Macoupin and Montgomery. WIOA is the overarching law providing direction and guidance for national employment programs which are then implemented at state and local levels.

**Scope of Work:** The scope of the project is to update the Regional Plan. The person(s) selected for this project would work closely with the Central Region Team, which includes Directors from three Workforce Boards responsible for the aforementioned 15 counties. This project is subject to change if the State lists additional requirements that are needed.

**Background:**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was passed into law on July 22, 2014. The purpose of this legislation is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA outlines a broad vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which local workforce areas can leverage other Federal, state, local and philanthropic resources to support businesses and job-seekers. The WIOA commitment is to provide high-quality services, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, such as apprenticeships, internships, work based learning, on-the-job training and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education or a Registered Apprenticeship. WIOA programs will provide a needed continuum of services to help support a high quality, integrated, and inclusive workforce system.

**Key deliverables:**

- Working in conjunction with the Central Region Team and local areas responsible for overseeing the completion of the regional plan for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development.
- Assist with meetings of Regional Partners and key stakeholders in the planning process.
- Gather and synthesize data and information from the regional meetings
- Based on partner input develop a draft of the Region's plan.
- Assist the Region in authoring the final document for submittal to the State of Illinois.
- See attached State of Illinois WIOA Regional Plan Template.

**Key skill sets include:**

- Skilled writer with experience in grant/program development.
- Strong facilitator with a demonstrated ability to lead people and get results through others by establishing joint ownership and accountability.
- Technical skills in project management, strategic planning, consensus building, conflict resolution and group decision-making.
- Effective collaborator with strong relationship-building skills.
- Understanding of workforce development programs.

## Illinois WIOA Planning Process

**Time Frame:** 2019-2020

**Individuals interested in this project should:**

1. Provide a letter of interest (maximum of 5 pages) with the following information:
  - Description of experience/background specific to the Scope of Work and deliverables listed above.
  - Writing Sample related to plan development.
  - Time availability.
  - Proposed cost.
2. Submit information by close of business on August 2, 2019 to:

Sarah Graham  
Illinois workNet Center  
1300 South 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Springfield, IL 62703  
(217) 524-6103  
[sgraham@worknet20.org](mailto:sgraham@worknet20.org)

*Illinois workNet Centers are an equal opportunity employer/program.  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*

## Illinois WIOA Planning Process

### **VISION**

WIOA requires the State, regional and local workforce plans be developed in concert with the core partners and stakeholders. Illinois' planning process begins with the state's vision and guiding principles as established by a State Leadership Team comprised of business, workforce, education, and state agency officials.

#### *Vision*

*"Business driven talent solutions that integrate education, workforce and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the state's economy."*

#### *Guiding Principles*

- *Demand Driven Orientation*
- *Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels*
- *Career Pathways to Today's and Tomorrow's Jobs*
- *Cross-agency Collaboration and Alignment*
- *Integrated Service Delivery*
- *Access and Opportunity for all Populations*
- *Clear Metrics for Progress and Success*
- *Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation*

### **STRATEGIES**

This vision and principles inform six strategies that the State Interagency Team comprised of the WIOA core partners and required one-stop partners will use to guide the State Unified Plan. The vision, principles, and key strategies developed at the state-level are the foundation to the regional planning process and plans.

- Align and integrate education, workforce, and economic development at the state and regional levels to improve the economic growth and competitiveness of Illinois employers and their workforce.
- Foster improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic growth for the state and its regions.
- Expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and aligned and integrated programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings.
- Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers including people with disabilities to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services.
- Expand information for employers and job-seekers to access services.
- Improve the Illinois public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways and targeted disadvantaged populations.

The development of the Unified State Plan requires significant stakeholder engagement through various methods of communication. Therefore, at the same time regional planning is occurring, the State Interagency Team will be using the information garnered from this process to inform the development of the Unified State Plan. In addition to this regional planning process, the State Interagency Team established Task Advisory Groups that engage in key issues that ultimately informs both the regional and state plans. These functional workgroups comment on policy and make recommendations that go to the State Workforce Board for approval.

## **REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS**

The State Interagency Team is using these principles and strategies to support regional teams in creating action plans across systems. A regional planning process is underway, facilitated by Maher & Maher that will assist regions in developing its own plan through a review of data, establishment of goals, and the coordination of resources. The Regional Plans do not have to be in place until July 1, 2020. The requirements for the regional planning process are outlined in Attachment 1.

### ***STEP 1: DATA DRIVEN FOUNDATIONS (November – January)***

Regional planning activities began with an extensive data analysis conducted by a state level interagency team. The data analysis identifies growth industry sectors for the ten economic development regions. Regional Teams received regional data to assist them in identifying and prioritizing target industries in their region. Regions worked with Maher & Maher to complete a self-assessment exercise to inform the planning process. It is expected that the regional teams will use the inventory of assets and data analysis to inform capacity building and/or expand partnerships. It is the State's expectation that the regional teams will complete Step 1 of the planning process in late January.

### ***STEP 2: INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIES AND SERVICES (February – April)***

Teams will participate in a summit that will focus on action-oriented planning to identify opportunities for the integration of regional strategies and services. It is expected that the regional team will develop cross-agency collaborations, identify services and leverage resources to support employment needs of the region/local areas. It is the State's expectation that the regional teams will complete Step 2 of the planning process in late March or early April.

### ***STEP 3: PERFORMANCE NEGOTIATIONS & OTHER REQUIREMENTS***

Adhere to the policy and procedures regarding the performance negotiations and other requirements that are included in the final regulations that are issued by the US Departments of Labor and Education. This information will be updated after the federal regulations are released.

## **REGIONAL PLANNING REGULATIONS**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and proposed regulations<sup>1</sup> requires Local Boards and chief elected officials within an identified planning region to participate in a regional planning process that results in the preparation of a regional plan that includes:

- The establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements;
- The development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region;
- The collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the State) which must include the local planning requirements at § 679.560(a)(1)(i) and (ii);
- The coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate;
- The coordination of transportation and other supportive services as appropriate;
- The coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers; and
- The establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region.

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<sup>1</sup> The Regional Planning requirement is posted at 20 CFR 679.510. It is important to note that the US Departments of Labor and Education have not finalized the State, Regional and Local planning guidelines.

## Illinois WIOA Planning Process

This document provides a working outline of the regional planning requirements that are included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and proposed regulations to guide discussions with regional partners. It is anticipated that the State of Illinois will formalize the regional and local planning requirements as the US Departments of Labor and Education issue the final planning regulations. The bold questions that are listed below must be addressed in the regional plans. Regional planning teams may include content beyond the scope of these questions including the detailed questions that are listed below each bold question/requirement.

### STEP 1: DATA-DRIVEN FOUNDATIONS

#### TIMELINE: NOVEMBER - JANUARY

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**A. Demonstrate how the region has collected and analyzed regional labor market which must include the local planning requirements. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

1. How were all core partners (Adult Ed., Title IB, Vocational Rehab and Wagner-Peyser) involved in providing, analyzing supply and demand data and the targeted sectors / industries / occupations / skills?
2. Have all core partners reached consensus on prioritizing sector and industry targets? Describe
3. Have all core partners formally committed to pursue the priorities developed by the regional team? Describe.
4. How is the region changing in terms of population demographics, labor supply and occupational demand?
5. What are the policy and service implications of the current LMI and projected LMI?
6. What special populations, including people with disabilities, are present in the region, how many individuals are there in each category, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?
7. What sectors / industries / occupations / skills are in demand and targets of opportunity?
  - a. What sectors / industries / occupations have favorable location quotients?
  - b. What sectors / industries / occupations have favorable demand projections based on growth?
  - c. What sectors / industries / occupations have favorable demand projections based on replacements?
  - d. What sectors / industries / occupations are considered mature but still important to the regional economy?
  - e. What sectors / industries / occupations are considered emerging in the regional economy?
  - f. What geographic factors impact the regional economy?
    - 1) Are people, service providers and industries evenly distributed throughout the region or clumped together?
    - 2) Are there inherent geographic advantages or disadvantages in the region?
8. What are the targeted industries and occupations and how were they determined using primary and secondary supply and demand data?

**B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

1. What sectors / industries / occupations / skills are the regional priorities and how was this determined?

## Illinois WIOA Planning Process

*(This question refers to how the targeted sectors / industries were ranked to establish a priority. Explain how the status of growing, maturing and emerging was factored into the ranking.)*

2. What sector-based partnerships exist in the region? If any exist, are they business-led and what is their role in planning?
3. What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?
4. What neutral conveners with the capacity to help establish sector partnerships exist in the region and what is their role in planning?

### STEP 2: INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIES AND SERVICES

#### TIMELINE: FEBRUARY - APRIL

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A. ***Describe the regional service strategies including use of cooperative service delivery agreement. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:***

1. What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising ROI?
2. What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising ROI?
3. What existing service delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal ROI?
4. What steps will be taken to promote each of the following service delivery strategies?
  - a. Accelerated time to earnings
  - b. Work-based learning opportunities including internships, on-the-job training, apprenticeships and incumbent worker training
  - c. Open entry – providing education and training to small cohorts based on business hiring demand vs. academic calendar
  - d. Open exit upon mastery of competencies
  - e. Career pathways – lifelong learning with upward mobility
  - f. Earning stackable, industry-recognized credentials
  - g. Ensuring high quality career services and cross-agency case management services are provided to students and jobseekers
  - h. Basic reading and math skills
  - i. Bridge programs
  - j. Providing robust data and information to career specialists, students and jobseekers
  - k. Innovation
  - l. Essential workplace skills
  - m. Services to special populations such as individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders and youth, including integration of people with disabilities into general workforce programs for which they are eligible
5. What formal and informal cooperative procedures will the core partners and other required partners establish to align services and coordinate delivery?
6. What regional planning efforts exist outside of WIOA, how are the core partners or other partners involved and how could WIOA planning integrate into those efforts? For example, the 60 X 25 education initiative and education regional planning councils may have significant overlap with WIOA strategies.

**B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region.**

**Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

1. What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?
2. What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?

**C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers.**

**Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

1. What economic development organizations or businesses are actively engaged in regional planning?
2. What economic development organizations or businesses were invited to participate but declined?
3. What input was provided by regional economic development organizations and businesses?
4. What input provided by economic development and businesses was incorporated into the regional plan?

**D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

1. What process was used between regional partners to reach agreement on cost sharing arrangements?
2. What process will be used to share administrative costs?

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**STEP 3: PERFORMANCE NEGOTIATIONS & OTHER REQUIREMENTS (TBD)**

**TIMELINE: TO BE DETERMINED**

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**A. Document how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

1. What process will be used to determine regional performance goals?
2. What process will be used to collectively negotiate performance goals?

**B. It is anticipated that the final regulations will impact this outline and will require additional information that is not listed above.**