



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL: RFP# CG-WFWIOA26R-2 Re-Bid Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Stand Alone Projects 2026 RFP-2

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### RFP TIMELINE SCHEDULE (dates/times subject to change)

<b>Bid Released</b>	<b>Wednesday, February 25, 2026</b>
Pre-Bid Conference	Friday, March 6, 2026
Questions Due	Tuesday, March 10, 2026 5:00PM
Staff Responses Post	Friday, March 13, 2026 5:00 PM
<b>Access Link Deadline</b>	<b>Thursday, March 26, 2026 11:00 AM</b>
<b>Bids Due</b>	<b>Friday March 27, 2026, 11:00AM</b>
<b>Proposer Presentation</b>	<b>TBD</b>

All programs and employers under the auspices of ETCOG is in compliance with EO (29 CFR 38.25).

## INTRODUCTION

### EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (ETCOG)

East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) is a voluntary association of counties, cities, school districts and special districts within a fourteen-county East Texas region. ETCOG assists local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating sound regional development. Either directly or through contractors, ETCOG provides programs and services for East Texas seniors, employers, and job seekers. ETCOG also builds the 9-1-1 emergency call delivery system, provides peace officer training and homeland security planning services; and delivers rural transportation services, business finance programs, grant writing services and environmental grant funding for the region.

### WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS OF EAST TEXAS (WSET)

The Workforce Solutions of East Texas (WSET) service area consists of the following counties: Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood. The 14 County East Texas Workforce Development Area had a population of 905,134 in 2025.

### WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS OF EAST TEXAS BOARD

The Workforce Solutions of East Texas Board (WSETB) is a volunteer board appointed by the Chief Elected Officials (CEO Board) of the East Texas Workforce Development Area and operates all facets of procedure and function in accordance with established WSETB Policies and Procedures. WSETB is composed of a majority membership of individuals from the private sector along with individuals representing labor, education, social services, community-based organizations, rehabilitation agencies and other local interests.

ETCOG serves as grant recipient and administrative unit for WSETB and the CEO Board. This procurement is being conducted by ETCOG under the policy direction of these governing bodies.

Workforce Solutions East Texas has five workforce center locations, and three Mobile Workforce Centers in the East Texas area available to job seekers and employers. Workforce Center locations are as follows:

- Workforce Solutions - Tyler 4100 Troup Hwy, Tyler, TX, 75703, United States (Smith County)
- Workforce Solutions - Longview 1905 W. Loop 281 Ste. 40, Longview, TX, 75601, United States (Gregg County)
- Workforce Solutions - Marshall 4300 East End Blvd S, Marshall, TX 75672, United States (Harrison County)
- Workforce Solutions - Athens 205 N Murchison St, Athens, TX 75751, United States (Henderson County)
- Workforce Solutions - Palestine 500 E Murchison St, Palestine, TX 75801, United States (Anderson County)

**Workforce Center Locations and Hours are as follows:**

<b>Workforce Centers - Hours and Days of Operation</b>			
<b>WSET Location</b>	<b>Days of Week</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>County</b>
Athens	Monday through Friday	8:00 – 5:00 (CDT)	Henderson
Longview	Monday through Friday	8:00 – 5:00 (CDT)	Gregg
Marshall	Monday through Friday	8:00 – 5:00 (CDT)	Harrison
Palestine	Monday through Friday	8:00 – 5:00 (CDT)	Anderson
Tyler	Monday through Friday	8:00 – 5:00 (CDT)	Smith

**Population Served:** Along with Child Care Service, WSETB funding sources currently consist of federal grant funds which are used to provide education, training and employment opportunities for (1) adults (including economically disadvantaged adults); (2) dislocated workers; (3) youth/out-of-school (including economically disadvantaged youth); and (4) recipients of public assistance.

**Mobile Units:** WSETB owns three (3) mobile units, configured to work with more rural areas to provide outreach services focused on serving those communities.

**NOTE:** More information about WSETB is available at <http://www.easttexasworkforce.org> and more information about ETCOG is available at <http://www.etcog.org>

## PERFORMANCE TERM

The period of performance is July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. It is expected the subaward term will be one (1) year with options for three (3) additional one-year periods. The calendar for this contract is listed below.

1st Year	July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027
Option Year 1 (must be approved)	July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2028
Option Year 2 (must be approved)	July 1, 2028 to June 30, 2029
Option Year 3 (must be approved)	July 1, 2029 to June 30, 2030

**NOTE:** Performance and Funding will be considered prior to approval. This contract is contingent upon the availability of funding and approval by the WSETB. In the event funding is reduced, withdrawn, or not approved, ETCOG reserves the right to cancel, delay, or modify the contract without penalty.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Proposers may be governmental units, public agencies, business organizations, labor organizations, public or private not-for-profit corporations, or private for-profit corporations organized in accordance with state and federal laws.
2. Joint proposals or Co-proposals are allowable. A description of the relationship of the joint proposers must be included in the Proposal Narrative.
3. Contracting opportunities for historically underutilized (disadvantaged) business (HUBs) and VetHUBs as defined in Texas Government Code 2161.001 [Texas Government Code, Chapter 2161](#) shall be considered in the procurement process. Proposer must submit verification of its HUB status with its response to the RFP.
  - The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board shall ensure that small, minority, disadvantaged, women’s businesses, and service disable veterans ([Texas Government Code, Chapter 2161](#)) are considered as sources for acquisitions whenever possible by:
    - choosing the VetHUB/HUB organization in the case of tie bids;
    - soliciting these businesses whenever they are potential sources;
    - when economically feasible, dividing total desired services into smaller components to permit maximum participation by these businesses;
    - if the requirement permits, establishing delivery schedules that will encourage small, minority, disadvantaged, and women’s businesses to participate; and
    - using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration or the Minority Business Development Agency, as needed.

**Note:** The Successful Proposer, if any, will be solely selected by the judgement of WSETB.

## GRANT AUTHORITY

The selected proposer shall implement this Grant Award in compliance with the provisions of:

- WIOA, Public Law (Pub. L.) 113-128, 29 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapter 32;
- Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Pub. L. 118-47) (2024);
- All applicable federal statutes, regulations, policies, and guidance presently in effect and that may become effective during the term of this Grant Award, specifically including 20 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Parts 675 through 683, 29 C.F.R. Part 38, and the applicable State plan;
- Department of Labor regulations at 2 C.F.R. Part 2900;
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 12-23, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities Program Allotments for Program Year (PY) 2025;
- 40 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Part 20;
- Approved Local Workforce Development Board Plan including modifications and amendments; and
- Workforce Solutions East Texas Board directives, Federal and State Rules, TWC Workforce Development (WD) Letters, and other TWC issuances. All acts, regulations, letters, manuals, policies, and procedures cited are incorporated into this subaward as if fully set forth herein.

## PURPOSE

The East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG), as the administrative unit for the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board (WSETB) is soliciting proposals to provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Stand Alone Services specifically focused on a medical career pathway that leads to a self-sufficient wage for a single person in the East Texas Workforce Development Area as listed on the Self Sufficiency Level chart for East Texas (Attachment C). The proposed budget for this WIOA project is \$150,000. The proposed program must provide a comprehensive training pipeline designed for youth who either possess no prior skills or who have some relevant experience but are not currently earning a self-sufficient wage. The program should deliver foundational skill development, industry-recognized medical training, and clearly defined career pathways that lead to credentials and employment in medical occupations paying a self-sufficient wage. Services must support participants from initial enrollment through training completion, credential attainment, and job placement in roles that offer long-term career growth and economic stability.

## PROPOSAL INFORMATION

The proposer selected will be responsible for working with the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board to fulfill their Mission and Vision Statements.

### Mission

The Mission of the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board is to improve the quality of life through economic development by providing a first-class workforce for present and future businesses.

### Vision

Workforce Solutions East Texas has active economic development with a premier workforce attracting and supporting growth of business and industry.

A copy of the WSETB/ETCOG Customer Service Creed (**Attachment D**) is and will be a part of any subaward resulting from this RFP. The successful Proposer will be required and expected to adhere to the Creed in conducting any and all its workforce operations.

## PRE-BID CONFERENCE

**Pre-Bid Conference** will be held on **Friday, March 6, 2026**. A Pre-Bid Conference is an opportunity for potential Proposers to ask questions and receive responses from key staff concerning RFP requirements and scope of service requirements pertaining to proposal content. Although attendance is not mandatory it is highly recommended. **Attendance may be in person at 3800 Stone Road, Kilgore, TX or virtual, if requested. Please email [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) if you plan to attend virtually and a meeting invite will be emailed.**

**Notice:** Proposers are requested to please **(1)** read the RFP and any related documentation before attending the Pre-Bid Conference; **(2)** bring their RFP copy and related documents to the meeting with them, and **(3)** have all questions and/or concerns already prepared before attending.

## SCOPE OF PROPOSAL

Through this RFP, proposals for projects are requested that will help out-of-school youth achieve academic and employment success. Stand Alone Youth Project proposers are allowed to offer proposals covering any location within the Workforce Development Area.

Stand Alone projects are expected to operate completely independent of the Workforce Centers and are allowed to offer any combination of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act allowable activities which support the Texas Workforce Performance Measures attainment. Program elements (allowable services) are described below. Services a youth participant receives must be based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy.

### **Program Elements (allowable services)**

- 1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies** leading to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.
- 2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.**
- 3. Paid and unpaid work experiences** that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
  - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
  - Pre-apprenticeship programs—a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, registered apprenticeship programs;
  - Internships and job shadowing;
  - On-the Job Training (OJT opportunities), as defined in WIOA §3(44).

Work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate, and may take place in the private for-profit sector, the nonprofit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience in which an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or applicable state law, exists.

Work experience must include an academic and occupational education component that:

- refers to contextual learning that accompanies a work experience;
- includes the information necessary to understand and work in specific industries and/or occupations;
- may occur concurrently or sequentially with the work experience;
- may occur inside or outside the worksite;
- may be provided by the employer, or provided separately in a classroom, or through other means;

Boards have the flexibility to decide who provides the academic and occupational education component.

Examples of occupational education may include:

- a hospital work experience in which hospital staff teaches the youth about the duties of different types of hospital occupations, such as a phlebotomist, radiology tech, or physical therapist; or
- an auto-repair shop work experience in which auto-mechanics teach the youth about building or repairing a car.

Examples of the academic component of work experience may include:

- a hospital work experience in which hospital staff teaches the youth what individuals in occupations such as phlebotomist, radiology tech, or physical therapist need to know, such as why blood type matters, the name of a specific bone in the body, or the function of a specific ligament;
- job readiness courses provided by the Board's youth contractor; or
- receiving a lecture from a teacher or an employer on best practices medical assistant.

Allowable expenditures that may be counted toward the work experience expenditure requirement may include the following:

- Wages/stipends paid for participation in a work experience;
- Staff time working to identify and develop a work experience opportunity.

**4. Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the workforce area involved, if the Board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA §123.**

Occupational skills training is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.

Boards must give priority consideration to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the workforce area.

Such training must:

- be outcome oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the individual service strategy;
- be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal; and WIOA Guidelines (Available upon request)
- result in attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) may be used to fund training programs for eligible WIOA out-of-school youth.

An ITA is:

- used by participants for training services;
- WIOA funded; and

- established on behalf of a WIOA out-of-school youth eligible for training services and for other WIOA programs.

Instruction through Individual Training Accounts must be provided through providers certified through the Statewide Eligible Training Provider System. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires for training providers to apply to a Workforce Development Board for certification to receive WIOA funds. The publicly accessible Statewide List of Certified Training Providers includes all training programs that are currently approved by one or more boards and certified by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Training Providers.

An overview of the Eligible Training Provider System may be found at this link on the TWC website and can be access at link below at:

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/agency/workforce-development-boards/eligible-training-providers>

Training services funded through ITAs, with the exception of registered apprenticeship programs, must be directly linked to occupations that are on the Board’s Target Occupations List or are on the Target Occupations List for another local workforce development area (workforce area) to which an eligible participant is willing to commute or relocate.

<https://www.easttexasworkforce.org/east-texas-targeted-occupations>

Individual Training Accounts may not exceed \$14,000 in total unless an exception is granted by the Director of the ETCOG Workforce and Economic Development Division. Individuals Training Accounts cannot be more than a duration of two years or 80 semester hours unless approved by the Director of the ETCOG Workforce and Economic Development Division. (This Director is authorized as the Workforce Solutions East Texas Board Executive Director.)

- 5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway.**
- 6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.**

Leadership development opportunities are opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors, such as:

- exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities;
- community and service-learning projects;
- peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
- organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training;
- training in decision making, including determining priorities and problem solving;
- citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training;
- civic engagement activities that promote the quality of life in a community; and
- other leadership activities that place youth in a leadership role such as serving on youth leadership committees, such as a Standing Youth Committee.

Positive social and civic behaviors are outcomes of leadership opportunities that are incorporated by as part of a menu of services and that focus on areas that may include the following:

- Positive attitude development;

- Self-esteem building;
- Openness to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds;
- Maintaining healthy lifestyles, including being alcohol and drug free;
- Maintaining positive social relationships with responsible adults and peers and contributing to the well-being of one's community, including voting;
- Maintaining a commitment to learning and academic success;
- Avoiding delinquency;
- Postponing parenting;
- Responsible parenting, including child support education;
- Positive job attitudes and work skills; and
- Keeping informed in community affairs and current events.

**7. Support services, as defined in WIOA §3(59), which enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities.** These services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Linkages to community services;
- Assistance with transportation;
- Assistance with child care and dependent care;
- Assistance with housing;
- Needs-related payments (not available for this RFP);
- Assistance with educational testing;
- Reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities;
- Referrals to health care;
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear;
- Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes; and
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

**8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation.**

Adult mentoring for youth must:

- be a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities in which the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the youth;
- include a mentor who is an adult other than the assigned youth case manager; and
- at a minimum, match the youth with an individual mentor with whom the youth interacts on a face-to-face basis. Group mentoring activities and mentoring through electronic means are allowable as part of mentoring activities.

Mentoring may include workplace mentoring in which the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company.

**9. Follow-up services for not fewer than 12 months after the completion of participation.**

Follow-up services are critical services provided after a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or postsecondary education and training. Follow-up services for youth may include:

- leadership development opportunities and support services;
- regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems;
- assistance in securing better-paying jobs, career pathway development, and further education or training;
- work-related peer support groups;
- adult mentoring;
- supportive services;
- financial literacy education;
- services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local workforce area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- services necessary to ensure the success of youth participants in employment and/or postsecondary education.

Boards must attempt to provide all youth participants with some form of follow-up services for a minimum duration of 12 months. Follow-up services may be provided beyond 12 months at the Board's discretion. The types of services provided and the duration of services must be determined based on the needs of the individual, and therefore, the type and intensity of follow-up services may differ for each participant. However, follow-up services must include more than only a contact attempted or made for securing documentation in order to report a performance outcome.

At the time of enrollment, a youth must be informed that follow-up services will be provided for 12 months following exit. If a youth cannot be located or refuses follow-up services, discontinue attempts to provide follow-up services and document in *WIT Case Notes*.

**10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.**

Comprehensive guidance and counseling is individualized counseling to participants that includes career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs, as appropriate.

**11. Financial literacy education.**

The financial literacy education program element may include any of the following activities that:

- support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking, and savings accounts, and make informed financial decisions;
- support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards;
- teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores, what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information, how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies, and how to improve or maintain good credit;

- support a participant’s ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions;
- educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identify theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and in other ways understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data;
- support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English-speaking participants, including providing support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials; and
- support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, including connecting them to benefits planning and work incentives counseling.

When providing any of the financial activities listed above, financial education provided is age-appropriate and timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings.

The Financial Literacy Guide is provided for financial institutions interested in enhancing youth financial capability by partnering with youth employment programs. It describes how and why financial institutions engage in helping youth achieve greater financial well-being and employment success.

Additionally, Workforce Boards may implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable participants to attain greater financial health and stability by using high-quality, age-appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including, when possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools, and instruction.

## **12. Entrepreneurial skills training.**

Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, including, but not limited to, the ability to:

- take initiative;
- creatively seek out and identify business opportunities;
- develop budgets and forecast resource needs;
- understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and
- communicate effectively and market oneself and one’s ideas.

Approaches to teaching youth entrepreneurial skills include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business. Entrepreneurship education programs often guide youth through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation.
- Enterprise development, which provides support and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping youth access small loans or grants needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to the development of viable business ideas.
- Experiential programs that provide youth with experience in the day-to-day operation of a business. These programs may involve the development of a youth-run business that young

people participating in the program work in and manage. Or they may facilitate placement in apprentice or internship positions with adult entrepreneurs in the community.

**13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the workforce area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.**

Numerous tools and applications can be used to provide youth with relevant labor market and career information. Labor market information (LMI) tools can be used to help youth and young adults make appropriate decisions about education and careers. LMI tools identify in-demand industries, occupations, and employment opportunities, and provide knowledge of job market expectations including education, skills requirements, and potential earnings.

WIOA youth program providers are encouraged to use readily available online career exploration tools to help youth assess their abilities and interests and find related employment information. Suggested online tools that connect youth to self-service LMI tools include [Texas Reality Check](#), [Texas Career Check](#), [My Next Move](#), and [Get My Future](#).

Career awareness activities include providing information on a variety of careers and occupations available, their skill requirements, working conditions and training prerequisites, and job opportunities across a wide range of industry sectors.

Career counseling or guidance may include advice and support in making decisions about what career paths to take, providing information about résumé preparation, interview skills, potential opportunities for job shadowing, and the long-term benefits of postsecondary education and training (for example, increased earning power and career mobility).

**14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.**

Postsecondary preparation and transition activities and services prepare OSY (Out-of-School Youth) for advancement to postsecondary education after attaining a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Post-secondary education includes many kinds of education and training programs, including technical college degree and certification programs, apprenticeships, two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities, trade schools, and more.

Transition planning may include, but is not limited to, programs designed to expand access to college and other postsecondary institutions, particularly for youth facing barriers to enrollment. Activities may focus on improving academic readiness, identifying postsecondary strengths and interests, and helping with applying for college and institutional admission or financial aid.

Common activities include, but are not limited to:

- individualized career planning;
- career shadowing;
- postsecondary education options exploration, including technical schools, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and registered apprenticeship programs;

- postsecondary education admissions counseling;
- postsecondary education application assistance;
- postsecondary education financial aid assistance;
- fields of study guidance;
- postsecondary education campus visits;
- postsecondary education entrance exam (SAT/ACT) preparation; and
- study skills workshops and parent support workshops.

Resources for such activities may include school counselors, teachers and parents, graduates and current students, and employers, as well as career exploration programs, and library and online career information.

### **Participant in the Youth Program (Definition)**

An individual is a “participant” in the WIOA youth program once all of the following has occurred:

- An eligibility determination
- The provision of an objective assessment, which includes a review of: the youth’s academic and occupational skill levels; and the service needs and strengths of each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways.
- Development of an individual service strategy that is based on the needs of each youth; identifies career pathways, including education and employment goals; considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment; and prescribes achievement objectives and services for the youth.
- Participation in any of the 14 WIOA youth program elements.

### **WIOA Youth Eligibility**

To be eligible to receive WIOA youth services through this Request for Proposals, an individual must:

- be a citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the United States;
- meet Military Selective Service registration requirements (males only); and
- be an Out of School Youth (OSY), as defined by WIOA §129(a)(1)(B)–(C).

Note: Authorization to work in the United States can be verified through eligibility for UI benefits.

An Out-of-School Youth is an individual who is:

- Not younger than 16 and not older than 24 years at the time of enrollment in WIOA;
- Not attending secondary or postsecondary school at the time the eligibility determination portion of program enrollment in WIOA is made; and
- One or more of the following:
  - A school dropout—an individual between the ages of 19 and 24 who is no longer attending any school (including an alternative school) and has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
  - Between the ages of 16 and 18, and has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter (acceptable documentation includes a self-attestation referenced in *Counselor Notes* and maintained in a hard case file, or a school attendance record);

- A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual (see Low-Income Exception) or lives in a high-poverty area and is either
  - basic skills deficient, as defined by WIOA §3(5); or
  - an English language learner, defined as an individual who has a limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, and whose native language is a language other than English; or who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language (self-attestation or notes in WIT Case *Notes* are acceptable documentation);
  - Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
  - Homeless; a runaway; in foster care, has aged out of the foster care system, or has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption; a child eligible for assistance under §477 of the Social Security Act (42 USC §677); or in an out-of-home placement;
  - Pregnant or parenting;
  - Disabled; or
  - A low-income individual (see Low-Income Exception), or an individual who lives in a high-poverty area, who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to obtain or retain employment.

#### Low-Income Exception

WIOA maintains a 5 percent low-income eligibility exception in which 5 percent of youth who would ordinarily need to be low income for eligibility purposes, do not need to meet the low-income criteria. However, because not all OSY are required to be low income, the 5 percent low-income exception under WIOA is calculated based on the number of youth enrolled in a given program year who are required to meet the low-income criteria.

For example, a workforce area enrolled 200 youth, and 80 of those youth were OSY who were not required to meet the low-income criteria, 60 were OSY who were required to meet the low-income criteria, and 60 were ISY. In this example, the 60 OSY required to be low income and the 60 ISY are the only youth factored into the 5 percent low-income exception calculation. Therefore, in this example, six of the 120 youth who ordinarily would be required to be low income do not have to meet the low-income criteria based on the low-income exception.

#### Determining School Status

For the purpose of determining OSY eligibility, a child is “attending school” (an In School Youth rather than an Out of School Youth) if, at the time the eligibility determination portion of program enrollment in WIOA is made, the child:

- is enrolled in a school, including any of the following:
  - public school;
  - charter school;
  - private school; or
  - disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP);
- is homeschooled;
- is attending high school equivalency programs funded by the public K–12 system;
- is a high school graduate who has registered for postsecondary classes, even if not yet attending postsecondary classes;
- is attending postsecondary school classes; or
- is in between postsecondary school semesters and has registered for classes for a future semester or has paid all or part of the tuition for a future semester.

The following programs are not considered “school” under WIOA:

- Adult education provided under Title II of WIOA
- Youth Build programs
- Job Corps programs
- High school equivalency programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)
- Dropout re-engagement programs

Once the school status of a youth is determined that school status remains the same until exit from the WIOA youth program.

#### Low-Income

An individual who meets any *one* of the following criteria satisfies the low-income requirement for WIOA youth services:

- Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through SNAP, TANF, or the SSI program, or state or local income-based public assistance.
- Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that, in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current combined DOL 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level and HHS Poverty Guidelines identified on the WIOA Income Guidelines web page at: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/workforce-innovation-opportunity-act-eligibility-income-guidelines>
- Is a homeless individual as defined in §41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, or a homeless child or youth as defined in §725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the NSLA. While the free/reduced-price lunch low-income requirement primarily applies to ISY, if an OSY is a parent living in the same household as a child who receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch based on income level, then the OSY parent would meet the low-income criteria based on the child’s qualification.
- Is a foster youth, as defined in Texas Family Code §264.101(a-1) and §264.101(d), on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made.
- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets:
  - WIOA’s income requirements, even if the individual’s family income does not meet the income requirements; or
  - the income eligibility criteria for payments under any federal, state, or local public assistance program

#### Basic Skills Deficient

An individual who meets either of the following criteria satisfies the basic skills deficient requirement for WIOA youth services:

- Is a youth who has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- Is a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.

If using an assessment instrument to assess basic skills, Boards must use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population, and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.

Skill levels “at or below the eighth-grade level” may be determined by:

- a TABE test score of 8.9 or below (TABE is the only assessment instrument that WIT can use to calculate the educational functioning level); or
- another generally accepted standardized test. CASAS – basic skills deficient score is 237 or below in Reading and 235 or below in Math.

#### High-Poverty Area

A youth living in a high-poverty area automatically meets the low-income criterion. A high-poverty area is a Census tract, a set of contiguous Census tracts, Native American Reservation, tribal land, or Native Alaskan Village or county that has a poverty rate of at least 25 percent, as set every five years using American Community Survey 5-Year data

#### **Youth Program Design**

The design framework of local youth programs must:

- Provide for an objective assessment of each youth participant, including a review of the academic and occupational skill levels and service needs, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants and informing the individual service strategy. The objective assessment must include a review of:
  - basic skills;
  - occupational skills;
  - work experience;
  - employability;
  - interests;
  - aptitudes;
  - support service needs; and
  - developmental needs.

A new assessment of a participant is not required if the Board determines that it is appropriate to use a recent assessment (made within the last six months) of the participant conducted as part of another education or training program.

- Develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy for each youth participant that:
  - is directly linked to one or more indicators of performance (as described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A)(ii));
  - identifies appropriate career pathways that include education and employment goals;
  - considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment; and
  - prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participant; and
- Provide case management of youth participants, including follow-up services.

#### **Incentives for Youth**

Incentives are allowed for youth participants if the incentives are connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in a program tied directly to education, training, or the successful completion of a work

experience. Boards must have written policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives and must ensure that WIOA-funded incentive payments are:

- tied to the goals of the specific program;
- outlined in writing before the commencement of the program;
- aligned with the local program’s organizational policies; and
- provided in accordance with the Cost Principles contained in 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance).

Examples of an achievement of milestones may include:

- attainment of a high school diploma or a Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency;
- completion of an industry recognized certificate/credential or occupational skills training;
- receipt of an associate or bachelor’s degree; or
- successful completion of a work experience.

While incentives may be provided for successful completion of a work experience, Boards must ensure that incentives are not tied to the “academic or occupational education component” of a work experience.

**Note:** WIOA-funded incentives may not be used to fund incentives for completing job readiness training or classes; however, private funds may leverage for incentives that WIOA cannot fund.

### **Performance Measures**

Stand Alone project designs must be capable of attaining State and Workforce Development Area set performance goals as well as related reporting and follow-up requirements. Current Texas Workforce Commission performance measures applicable for Youth Programs include:

Employed/Enrolled Q2 Post Exit – Youth  
Employed/Enrolled Q4 Post Exit – Youth  
Median Earnings Q2 Post Exit – Youth  
Credential Rate – Youth  
Measurable Skills Gains - Youth

The Texas Workforce Commission descriptions of these measures are available upon request. WSETB is responsible for meeting certain performance measure goals established by the Texas Workforce Commission. Goals are re-determined each Program Year by the Texas Workforce Commission. The attainment of these goals involves all participants enrolled in the respective workforce programs. Therefore, all enrollments in the WIOA Youth programs, through the workforce centers as well as Youth stand-alone projects, fall into the denominators of the related performance measures. Proposers will be responsible for maintaining acceptable participant outcomes for the individuals enrolled in their sub-awarded programs. Performance is determined by dividing the number of participants with acceptable outcomes (numerator) by the number in the denominator for each measure, i.e., numerator/denominator = performance percentage. The participants in the denominator are determined by the requirements for each measure.

## PROGRAM FUNDING

Up to \$150,000 is available through this Request for Proposals for the first contract year, and at each renewal. Proposers can request up to \$150,000. The funding provided for this RFP is 100% federally funded and none of the funding is provided from non-governmental sources.

It is anticipated the proposer with the highest ranked proposal meeting program qualifications will be fully funded for the amount requested. Any remaining funds will be allocated to other proposers in order of ranking as funding permits. However, WSETB reserves the right to vary funding awards if deemed in the best interest of the East Texas Workforce Development Area.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Allocate budget items proprietary in nature into a cost reimbursement format unless sold to the general public at the same price as offered in this RFP. The general public must comprise a substantial number of purchasers of Selected Proposer's product or service.

Ensure all funds provided through this RFP do not supplant other available federal, state, local, or private funds. This will be verified through subaward negotiations and language to this effect will be included in all subawards resulting from this RFP.

Clarification of WIOA funds and how the funds can be used.

WIOA Funds Are "Last-Dollar" but Permitted Alongside Pell  
WIOA training funds may be used when a participant:

- Cannot fully cover training costs with other grants, including Pell, or
- Needs assistance beyond Pell to cover total training costs.

WIOA does not prohibit co-funding. Instead, it requires coordination, so WIOA supplements other grants. WIOA is used when ALL other sources have been used or exhausted. Proof will be required.

Demonstrate administrative capability and fiscal responsibility needed to operate the programs proposed and to meet federal financial accountability requirements for most federal grants. Proposers with multiple funding sources must have a cost allocation plan and may not double bill for items to be charged to WSETB.

**As a part of this RFP process, proposers will be subject to a pre-award fiscal integrity review, which may include, but not limited to a review of proposer's record keeping procedures, management systems, accounting and administrative systems, training facilities, and curriculum as required by TWC Rule 802.21. Proposers will be notified of date and time of the review.**

The successful proposer will need to provide proof of General Liability and Errors and Omissions insurance. Workers Compensation insurance will need to be maintained to cover participants if

applicable. All insurance coverage will be confirmed during the fiscal integrity review and will need to be current prior to the start of the WIOA Subaward.

Response to RFP does not commit WSETB to award a subaward and/or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal response, nor pay for any other costs incurred prior to the execution of a formal subaward resulting from this RFP.

## **REQUIRED SUBMISSION DOCUMENTATION**

**Bid proposals/submissions are to include the following:**

- 1) References (p. 16); (return with submission)
- 2) Appendix I & Conflict of Interest form - signed; (return attachment with submission)
- 3) Appendix II - signed; (return attachment with submission)
- 4) TxDot, PTN-130 form; (return attachment with submission)
- 5) Signed 'Affirmation & Signature' (p. 32); (**must** return with submission) and,
- 6) Budget spreadsheets (return Attachment B with submission)
- 7) Participant Planning Summary (return Attachment A with submission)
- 8) Most recent Audit or Financial Statements (Profit/Loss Statement)
- 9) Staff Job descriptions and resumes

**Attention:** It is understood failure to provide the above items with a submitted proposal will diminish award consideration and ETCOG has the right to mark the proposal as non-compliant and treat it as a no-bid at their sole discretion.

**Note:** Only Proposals submitted with all the required documentation/response on this page shall be considered for award in conjunction with the Evaluation Criterion, (p. 25-30).

## CURRENT REFERENCES

Please provide three (3) references from similar firms for whom your organization provided like services specific to this RFP, other than ETCOG, who can verify performance as a vendor/service is preferred. **NOTE:** Inaccurate, obsolete, or negative responses may result in rejection of quote submissions.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contract Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

# of years contracted: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contract Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

# of years contracted: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contract Name/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

# of years contracted: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## PROPOSER COMMUNICATION

There is to be no communication allowed, in any form, between ETCOG and their representatives, other than conducting daily business unrelated to this RFP procurement, during the entirety of the RFP process. Failure to follow this directive will result in rejection of Proposer participation and/or submitted RFP proposal.

## QUESTION/RESPONSES

**Proposer Questions:** Proposer questions concerning this RFP are due by **Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 5:00 PM**, if not sooner, and must be emailed to Christine Weems, Facilitator at: [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) and no one else.

**Staff Responses:** Proposers **must** go online at <http://www.etcog.org/procurements> and click on 'Re-Bid Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Stand Alone Projects 2026 RFP-2' to retrieve responses to all questions asked, no earlier than **Friday, March 13, 2026 at 5:00PM**.

**NOTE:** Other than the above opportunity and unrelated daily business, there is to be no communication between Proposers and ETCOG staff or representatives during an active RFP process to ensure fair and open competition for all potential Proposers. To willingly do so may result in the disqualification of a Proposer for non-compliance of RFP restrictions.

## RFP RETRIEVAL

The RFP document, RFP updates, and additional RFP information or amendments will be posted on the ETCOG website and may be retrieved by clicking on 'Re-Bid Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Stand Alone Projects 2026 RFP-2' at <http://www.etcog.org/314/Request-for-Proposals.htm> or request by emailing to Christine Weems at: [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org)

## HARD COPY BID SUBMISSION

Hardcopy bid submissions must be clearly identified on the outermost return envelope or packaging and must be received by the bid submission date/time of **Friday, March 27, 2026 at 11:00 AM**, regardless if by mail, courier/delivery services, or hand delivered, at:

East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)  
Attn: Christine Weems, Strategic Procurement Manager  
3800 Stone Road, Kilgore, TX 75662

**Write: Company Name, RFP# CG-WFWIOA26R-2, Friday, March 27, 2026, in bottom left-hand corner of the outermost Return Envelope/Package**

**NOTE:** Telephone, emailed, and facsimile bid submissions are not allowed in response to this RFP.

1. Proposers are to submit one (1) clean hardcopy (free from copier marks) marked 'Original' along with (4) four additional copies marked 'Copy' and submit one (1) electronic copy of proposal to include all related documentation. Please do not use 3-ring binders.
2. Pages should be numbered and contain an organized, paginated table of contents corresponding to the section and pages of the proposal. At least an eleven (11pt) point font of Calibri, Ariel, or Times New Roman is acceptable and must be legible.
3. It is the Proposer's sole responsibility to prepare, submit, and deliver or arrange delivery of the RFP proposal(s) with all required exhibits and materials to the designated location on or before the published submittal deadline.
4. ETCOG will not bear liability for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of submissions in response to this RFP.
5. RFP submission deadline *time* will be determined by the ETCOG lobby clock.
6. If submitting more than one property to be considered, each property submission should be placed in a separate envelope and clearly identified with the RFP number, submittal deadline/opening date and time, as referenced on previous page.
7. Courier or delivery services may not deliver directly to the specified location; therefore, it is strongly recommended:
  - Proposers allow sufficient time for delivery of a hardcopy proposal prior to the published deadline date/time to the location specified.
  - Proposers understand that failure to submit a proposal by the designated deadline, for whatever reason, may not be grounds for disputing the procurement solicitation process or any resulting contract award.
8. It is the Proposer's sole responsibility to ensure any addenda or additional materials pertinent to their proposal be included in or with their RFP submission. ETCOG will not be held liable for missing addenda or materials at the time of the RFP Opening and said addenda or additional materials will not be accepted past the RFP submission deadline date and time.

## **DIGITAL BID SUBMISSION**

### **Upload Requirements/Instructions**

1. Proposers must **email** Christine Weems at [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) to request an 'Access Link' by **11:00 AM, Thursday, March 26, 2026**, if not sooner, to receive digital upload purposes.
2. Access code requests by phone, voicemail, or past the noted deadline date/time above will not be accepted, **no exceptions**.

3. It is the Proposer's sole responsibility to upload their RFP proposal digitally with all required exhibits and materials by referenced '**RFP Submission Due' deadline date/time (p. 1)**, if not sooner.

#### **RFP RETRIEVAL**

The RFP document, related appendix, RFP bid updates, and any additional RFP information or amendments throughout the bid process will be posted as warranted on the ETCOG website. It may be retrieved by clicking on the 'Re-Bid Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Stand Alone Projects 2026 RFP-2' link at <https://www.etcog.org/procurements> or request by emailing Christine Weems at: [christine.weems@etcog.org](mailto:christine.weems@etcog.org) Please note, it is the Proposer's sole responsibility to stay informed of any RFP changes/updates.

### **VetHUB BEST PRACTICES and WIOA NONDISCRIMINATION ACT**

VetHUB is a program that focuses on certification of service-disabled veterans to facilitate their growth and development and increase VetHUB contract and subcontracts with the State of Texas. ETCOG shall ensure veteran-owned businesses are considered as sources for acquisitions whenever possible by:

- soliciting these businesses whenever they are potential sources;
- when economically feasible, dividing total desired services into smaller components to permit maximum participation by these businesses;
- if the requirement permits, establishing delivery schedules that will encourage VetHub to participate; and
- using the services and assistance of the VetHub list on the Texas Comptroller website, as needed.
- Vendors are encouraged to make a good faith effort to consider VetHubs when subcontracting.
- utilizing the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](#) ;
- utilizing Web sites or other directory listings maintained by local Chambers of Commerce.
- advertising subcontract work in local veteran and minority publications; and/or contacting the contracting state agency for assistance in locating available VetHubs.

Please refer to [Texas Government Code, Chapter 2161](#) for HUB and VetHUB general provision.

All vendors and their contractors and subcontractors shall comply with all applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of federal and state law and all regulations implementing the laws.

**As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of WIOA, the grant applicant assures that it has the ability to comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws and will remain in compliance for the duration of the award of federal financial assistance:**

**(A)** Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin

(including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity;

**(B)** Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color and national origin;

**(C)** Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;

**(D)** The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and

**(E)** Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

The grant applicant also assures that, as a recipient of WIOA Title I financial assistance, it will comply with [29 CFR part 38](#) and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

## **PROPOSAL OPENING**

ETCOG reserves the right to a closed RFP process for bid submission review/analysis and award recommendation procedures to the best interest of and best benefit to ETCOG and programs served as well as ensure the best competitive edge for all parties, and in accordance to [Texas Local Government Code](#):

*Sec. [252.049](#). CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION IN BIDS OR SUBMISSIONS.* Bid submissions will be received until the deadline date/time as referenced under '*RFP Timeline Schedule. p. 1*', and public attendance is allowed. However, only the names of submitting Proposers will be read and disclosed if received by the deadline date/time.

- All bid submissions become the property of ETCOG after the RFP deadline/opening date.
- Responses submitted shall constitute an offer for a period of one hundred eighty (180) calendar days or until a preferred selection for the award is approved by ETCOG, whichever comes first.
- All programs and employers under the auspices of ETCOG are following EEO. Auxiliary aids and services are available, upon request, to individuals with disabilities.

## PROPOSAL NARRATIVE / EVALUATION CRITERION

### NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- A minimum of 80 points is required to be eligible for subaward, **with no exceptions.**
- Respond to every question asked.
- Restate the question and type your response immediately following the question.
- Do not renumber the questions. Use the same number appearing in this RFP for the question prior to your answers as the rating sheets are keyed to the question numbers. Evaluators cannot locate your responses if you change the numbering system.
- Respond to each question completely and independently from any previous questions/responses. Cross-referencing a response to a previous response to a different question is not acceptable and may not be recognized as a valid response at the sole determination of ETCOG and WSETB.

### **I. DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS**

#### **A. Organizational Experience**

1. Please describe your organization's experience in developing and managing Youth Programs.
  - a. How many months or years has proposer been in operation?
  - b. Describe your organization's experience in managing grant funds.
  - c. How many years have you provided youth services?
  - d. Indicate the number of youth participants being served annually by your organization.
  - e. Describe the youth programs developed and managed by proposer in the past.
  - f. List staff digital case management experience
  - g. Describe similar projects/programs your organization has developed or managed.
2. Does proposer have any negative monitoring or audit findings in the last three years?
3. For any negative audit findings,
  - a. Indicate if they were resolved within the subaward period,
  - b. Were subject to repayment, or were part of an audit/investigation.
4. Make sure a copy of proposer's last audit or financial statement (profit/loss statement) is included with the proposal submission.

## **B. Past Performance**

1. If the proposer has operated a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Stand Alone Youth Project in the past three years, provide a summary of current and past performance during this period.

## **II. QUALITY OF PROGRAM DESIGN**

### **A. Strategy to Meet Performance Standards**

1. Please describe the outcomes for participants in this project and the steps that will be taken to assure Performance Measures will be attained. Address each performance measure (**See page 17 Performance Measures**) in this narrative.
2. What actions will the sub-recipient take to address program deficiencies?
  - a. Explain what systems and processes are used to identify program performance deficiencies and to address these deficiencies (i.e., quality assurance, file reviews, and corrective action procedures).
  - b. How will staff be held accountable for performance outcomes?
3. Explain in detail what steps will be taken to ensure the youth performance measures will be met or exceeded. The Board's goal is for WIOA performance measures be attained at 95%.
4. Provide details of the proactive actions the sub-recipient will take for each performance measure to maximize performance while the participants are receiving services and in follow-up (i.e., Credential, Job Search, Q2/Q4 Employed post Exit)?
5. Credential attainments are important for the WIOA Youth Credential performance measure. Describe steps, processes, etc. your organization will implement to obtain verification of the credentials WIOA Youth participants receive. Include the steps/processes your organization will implement for the participants;
  - a. who remain in contact with your organization; and
  - b. who do not stay in contact with your organization.

A credential is issued by a third party with authoritative power and is proof of an individual's qualification or competence in a given subject. Possessing a credential not only helps one to prove competency and capability in a given field but also demonstrates to one's community and employers that the individual is competent, properly trained and equipped to carry out his or her duties. To sit for a credential exam, an individual must possess certain requirements — a set level of education, experience, or a combination of both. Credentials serve as verification that a professional has achieved a baseline level of competency in his or her subject matter. With credentialed staff members, employers are assured of having a workforce of employees that are capable of handling whatever challenges their job responsibilities present. Obtaining the credential from the participant, school, training provider, college, university, etc., can be challenging.

**B. Specific Explanation of Allowable WIOA Services to be Offered and Number of Youth to be Served in Each Activity**

1. Please describe the services that will be provided and the design for providing these services. Include in the description:
  - a. What services will be provided and what activities will comprise each service?
  - b. How will placement and/or employability development be addressed?
  - c. How will services provided help address existing barriers?
  - d. What supportive services are envisioned?
  - e. Please describe the time frames for the start of the services once a subaward has been negotiated. Include the time needed to hire and train staff, and to procure equipment and space.
  - f. Explain in detail how the sub-recipient will continue contact with WIOA Youth in the Follow-up Service activity.
  
2. Describe the population the proposed project will serve and the need for the proposed project. Include in the description:
  - a. How many participants will:
    - Be Served:
    - Be Credentialed:
    - Enter and Retain Employment:
  - b. Complete a Participant Planning Summary (PPS), Attachment A.
    - enter the estimated participants in training
    - enter the service completion
    - enter credential/employment attainment (80% achievement rate expected)
  - c. In which county or counties will services be located?
  - d. How the project location(s) is accessible to participants?
  - e. What unmet service needs or gaps will the project address?

**C. Explanation of Recruitment Strategy**

1. Describe the participant recruitment strategy. Include a description of the approach for intake and assessment referral.
2. Explain in detail how the sub-recipient will meet its enrollment goals (enrollment is different than completion reflected in the Participant Planning Summary? Explain in detail how the sub-recipient will meet its enrollment goals (enrollment is different than successful completion of program) reflected in the Participant Planning Summary? Include Quarterly goals.

**D. Service Provider Staffing**

1. Describe the background and experience of staff who will be onsite:
  - providing management and operational direction;

- providing case management and data entry;
  - providing the proposed services; and
  - staff assuming the fiscal accountability for grant funds.
2. In addition to providing the above information, please attach staff job descriptions and resumes.

### III. COORDINATION

#### A. Demonstration of Cooperation

1. Explain how you will coordinate your services with the Workforce Centers. Workforce Solutions East Texas website: <https://www.easttexasworkforce.org/>

#### B. Service Provider Community/Social Service

1. Identify community/social service linkages the proposer has developed within the proposed service community that will enhance the quality and effectiveness of the project?
2. Describe measures that the proposer will take to assure involvement in the community?

### REASONABLENESS OF COST

#### A. Service Provider Organizational Capability

1. Describe proposer's record keeping system including the following elements:
- a. Participant Records including attendance
  - b. Fiscal Records
  - c. Invoice Supporting Documentation
  - d. Staff Personnel and Time Documentation
2. If applicable, describe in-kind or cash contributions which will be used to support the program and assign a monetary value to the in-kind contributions.
3. What are the proposer's other funding sources? Does sub-recipient have the ability to repay a disallowed cost? If so, explain what funds are available to repay the disallowance.
4. This proposal will be negotiated into a cost reimbursement subaward. Cash advances will be allowed subject to subaward provisions. Does proposer have the fiscal capability to operate with a cash advance system? If cash advances are requested, a fidelity bond will be required. See "Contract Payment Section" on **Page 33** for additional information.

Has proposer ever had to pay back funds to a funding source or the federal government? If yes, explain.

### C. Service Provider Budget

A. Cost Reasonableness will be addressed based upon a review of the *'Budget Worksheet, Attachment B,* and accompanying budget narrative submitted with this proposal. The amounts budgeted should not exceed what would be incurred by a prudent person conducting the same business under similar circumstances.

B. If your organization utilizes an indirect rate, please list the rate requested under this proposal, describe how the rate was established, and include a copy of the approval letter from the appropriate cognizant agency. If an organization wishes to use the de minimis allowed in the Uniform Guidance, the rate will be subject to approval by ETCOG.

1. Utilizing the forms in Attachment B, proposer must prepare a detailed and accurate budget reflecting the proper's best estimate of the cost of operating the project. Total funds available are identified under *Purpose, (p. 4)* of RFP document.

2. Budget Supporting Detail

The 'WIOA Youth Budget Supporting Detail' form (Attachment B) must be completed and must tie to the *'Salaries'* and *'Fringe Benefits'* portions of the *'Line Item Budget'* form under the *'Personnel Costs'* section. All applicable items must tie to budget. In addition, a narrative must be included in the space beneath each line item.

C. **Cost per Participant Served** will include everyone planned to be served whether they gain a positive outcome or not. Space for this calculation is provided on the Budget Worksheet. **(Calculation: Total amount of funds requested divided by the total number of planned participants.)**

## EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PROPOSALS

CRITERION TABLE	POINTS
<p><b><u>Demonstrated Effectiveness:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational Experience</li> </ul> <p>Past Performance (<i>including previous years and current performance</i>)  <b>(minimum required: 20 pts.)</b></p>	<b>25</b>
<p><b><u>Quality of Program Design:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy to Meet Performance Standards/Self Sufficient Wage</li> <li>• Specific Explanation of which allowable WIOA services to be offered and the number of youth to be served in each activity</li> <li>• Explanation of Recruitment Strategy</li> <li>• Service Provider Staffing</li> </ul> <p><b>(minimum required: 25 pts.)</b></p>	<b>30</b>
<p><b><u>Coordination and Commitment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of Cooperation</li> <li>• Service Provider Community/Social Service</li> </ul> <p><b>(minimum required: 10 pts.)</b></p>	<b>15</b>
<p><b><u>Reasonableness of Cost:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational Capability</li> <li>• Service Provider Budget</li> <li>• Cost per Participant Served and Cost per Positive Outcome</li> </ul> <p><b>(minimum required: 25 pts.)</b></p>	<b>30</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100</b>

**REMINDER:**

A minimum total score of **80 points must be achieved with no exceptions..** The ratings will be based on the qualifications provided in this proposal by the closing date/time of the RFP. More than one sub-recipient may be selected to perform services to the best benefit of ETCOG and WSETB at their sole discretion.

**Note: Proposer Presentations will be based on achieving the minimum score of 80.**

### PROPOSAL REVIEW TERMS

1. Proposal submissions will be reviewed by ETCOG staff to determine if proposal meets program needs and if requested information and required documentation as identified throughout the RFP document has been returned with submitted proposal.
2. As a standard, an evaluation team made up of staff, outside evaluators, committee members, and/or other subject matter experts as deemed necessary to achieve the best possible results will evaluate and score submitted proposals.

3. WSETB committees review evaluation results and make award recommendation(s) to WSETB, who will award the final selection of the successful proposer(s) and will authorize subawards for services.
4. ETCOG reserves the right to contact any source regarding, but not limited to, vendor reputation, product/service quality, work history, and/or past performance to evaluate/award the bid submission(s) that best meet ETCOG program needs, and clients served.
5. The evaluation team's preferred proposal will be presented to governing bodies as a recommendation for award so the governing body(s) may make a final award decision.

**Note:** Proposal must have original signature of the person having the authority to bind the organization to a contract or it **will** be rejected for non-compliance.

### **PROPOSAL AWARD TERMS**

1. ETCOG reserves the right to ask questions, request additional information or clarifications, hold individual interviews at any given time throughout the evaluation and negotiation process to determine the proposal which best meets the procurement needs being sought to the best benefit of ETCOG and programs served.
2. ETCOG reserves the right to allow corrections of non-material errors or omissions at ETCOG's sole discretion.
3. Submission of a proposal indicates Proposer's acceptance of the evaluation and award process and is in agreement the evaluation team may make subjective judgments in evaluating the proposals to determine best value to best benefit ETCOG and programs served.
4. ETCOG reserves the right to accept or reject any bid proposal received, as well as, cancel the RFP in its entirety at any time during the bid process, without notice or explanation, which may result due to unforeseen irregularities, low response, or procurement needs not being met by submitted proposals.
5. ETCOG may modify or waive any provisions set forth in this RFP for any reason and all herein mentioned without notice to anyone if deemed in the best interest of ETCOG and programs served.
6. ETCOG reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of any potential contract or service agreement resulting from this RFP to include but not limited to the RFP document, Proposer(s) submitted proposal, and the RFP exhibits and attachments, i.e., 'ETCOG General Terms & Conditions,' and the 'Essential Clauses and Certifications' pages requiring signatures, all acting as binding documents to said contract or service agreement.

ETCOG reserves the right, should contract negotiations fail, to enter negotiations with the next highest ranked Proposer with a proposal considered best to meet program needs and may continue in like manner until successful negotiations have been reached. Furthermore, although ETCOG has

the right to negotiate with the next highest-ranked Proposer, it is not required to do so and may re-procure or cancel the RFP at ETCOG's sole discretion.

7. Execution of any resulting contract or service agreement is required prior to processing any payments to the successful Proposer.

Pursuant to protocol to advise of the right to appeal, a protest must be submitted to ETCOG's Executive Director within ten (10) calendar days of the time the basis of the protest became known and said protest(s) limited to: 1) violations of federal law or regulations; 2) violations of State or local law under the jurisdiction of State or local authorities; and 3) violations of ETCOG's protest procedures for failing to review a complaint or protest. The protest must be submitted in writing and must identify the protestor, the solicitation being protested and specifically identify the basis for the protest, providing all pertinent information regarding the solicitation, contract, and/or actions of ETCOG.

### **PATENTS or COPYRIGHTS**

The proposer agrees to protect ETCOG from claims involving infringement of patent or copyrights, if warranted.

### **PROPOSER COMPLIANCE**

Proposer shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, statutes, ordinances, rules and regulations, and the orders and decrees of any court or administrative bodies or tribunals in any matter affecting the performance of the agreement including, if applicable, workers' compensation laws, minimum and maximum salary and wage statutes and regulations, and licensing laws and regulations. Proposers will be prepared to provide satisfactory proof of compliance if requested.

### **PROPOSAL AWARD NOTIFICATION**

1. It is expected an award will be made on June 4, 2026 (date subject to change)
2. Upon award notification all Proposers who responded to this RFP will be contacted

## CONTRACT PAYMENT

The subaward negotiated as a result of this request for proposals will be cost reimbursement. A cost reimbursement subaward is an agreement format wherein all *allowable* costs detailed in the budget attached to the executed subaward are reimbursed. (*Allowable* means allowable under the TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts and the Uniform Administrative Requirements). The Selected Proposer must maintain documentation that substantiates the expenditures.

The Workforce Solutions East Texas Board allows advance payments in accordance with the Uniform Guidance Administrative Requirements and TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts. Advance payments must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the entity in carrying out the purpose of the approved subaward. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the subrecipient for direct program costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs. If the subrecipient chooses not to obtain cash advances, the entity's request for reimbursement will be generally processed within 30 days of receipt. The proposer selected must be able to support all costs of the operation not advanced until they are reimbursed. **NOTE:** Further discussion of how direct costs will be reimbursed, and the amount and timing of cash advances will be agreed upon during subaward negotiations.

If cash advances are requested, successful proposer will be required to maintain a fidelity bond that covers at least 10% of the total funding amount. Proof of coverage will be required before any funds can be advanced.

In the event funding under this award is delayed by TWC, Proposer acknowledges that ETCOG shall not be held liable.

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

Proposer affirms understanding and acknowledgement of all referenced bid and program requirements contained within the RFP document; Appendix I - ETCOG Terms and Conditions/Conflict of Interest Questionnaire (CIQ) form; Appendix II - Essential Clauses & Certifications; TxDot PTN130 form, Attachments and any Exhibits (if provided) including any Child Care program related documentation, explicit to this bidding procurement. Proposer must return any and all such pages requiring action, signatures, or checkmarks from the RFP document, Appendices, and Attachments with any submitted bid proposal. Proposer further understands and acknowledges making a false statement or a false proclamation of compliance is a material breach and any subsequent award of product/equipment purchase(s), offered services, and/or contract/service agreement are grounds for award cancellation.

**SIGNATURE**

The undersigned individual hereby certifies and warrants that he/she has been fully authorized to execute this proposal/bid submission on behalf of their firm and to legally bind the firm to all the terms, performances, and provisions as herein set forth.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Company/Provider Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title of Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**IMPORTANT:** Proposer must return this page fully executed and complete with proper signatures and signature dates for current/active RFP or the submitted proposal will be marked 'Rejected/No Bid' due to non-compliance.