

**Health Care Jobs Pipeline Grant
Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund**

RFQ Questions & Answers

Updated 1/17/17 - All New Questions & Answers in Red

Application Package

Q: We intend to respond to the Health Care Jobs Pipeline RFQ. We understand that the application submission deadline is January 31, 2017, by Midnight. Do you also require a Letter of Intent to precede the application and, if so, by what date?

A: No letter of intent is required. However, the submission is required to be done through our on line link and we encourage applicants to begin the process through this link early and review directions in the RFQ about required documents that must be submitted to make a complete application.

<https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/328678>

Q: What is the narrative length limit?

A: There is no page limit for the narrative portion of the application. Please limit responses only to what is necessary to answer each question sufficiently.

Q: Where can I locate the attachment for budget excel sheets 3A, and 3B?

A: These budget forms can be found in a single spreadsheet at the bottom of the available funding page.

Eligible Lead Applicants

Q: We are a lead applicant on another CommCorp funded grant which ends March 31, 2017. Are we still eligible to be a lead applicant for this grant?

A: This would not disqualify you from being a lead grantee.

Q: Are you seeking partners to just help the Commonwealth Corp. re-design/design programs for 3 months or for the partners to be the ones implementing the programs with the at-risk population to find and keep employment?

A: Commonwealth Corporation seeks qualified partnerships that, upon successful grant award, will work with Commonwealth Corporation for a duration of three (3) months to design or re-design an occupationally-specific training and placement program that will support members of the populations identified by the Task Force in making a successful transition to employment in one of these four occupations: Medical Assistant, Home Health Aide, Certified Nursing Assistant or Recovery Coach (substance abuse and addiction services). At the conclusion of the program design phase, each partnership will be required to submit an implementation plan, detailed design, and budget for their training and placement program. Partnerships will have 1 ½ years to two years to deliver their program.

Partners

Q: We are partnering with a consortium of employers who have a variety of needs for skilled labor. In an effort to broaden opportunities for trainees in our programs, we would like to offer a **dual certification** for both CNA and Home Health Aide. Is this allowable under the guidelines of the RFQ?

A. See RFQ P.4 Section C:

“Target Occupations: During the implementation phase, partnerships will be required to provide training and placement services that prepare individuals to meet business’ skill and work-readiness requirements for one of the following occupations:

- Recovery Coach (for substance abuse and addiction services)
- Medical Assistant
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Home Health Aide

Partnerships should identify the specific occupation to be targeted and commit to designing and implementing a training program that prepares individuals for the specific occupation. Please note: we will consider applications from partnerships in which each of the health care business members employs both CNAs and Home Health Aides and, therefore, are proposing to target both of these occupations. However, any partnership proposing to target both CNAs and Home Health Aides is advised that we will not support a program design that provides a separate program track for each of these occupations.”

Q: Regarding the healthcare jobs pipeline grant RFP; if a bidder would like to incorporate work readiness training into the implementation phase of their project and wishes to utilize the well-designed and tested **Signal Success curriculum** developed by Commonwealth Corporation would there be a fee attached to this, and if so, do we need to have Commonwealth Corporation as a sub-contracted partner to our application and therefore provide us with a letter of commitment?

A: The decision to implement this curricula for services can be noted in your application and the decision to utilize the curricula may be determined during the design phase of the project should your application be funded. If your application is funded you may contact the designated staff person at Commonwealth Corporation to discuss the use of the Signal Success curriculum. Commonwealth Corporation as the grantor cannot be a formal partner in your application.

Q: Would it be acceptable to include a nonprofit partner (as the required community-based organization) who has experience in cultural competence and outreach strategies, and some experience in comprehensive case management, while including the government agency that has significant experience in case management? We are considering a model where we would work more closely with one of our WIOA partners that does extensive case management – and which would be the case management partner in the program.

A: Yes. Keep in mind that the community-based organization must have demonstrated competence in engaging with a specific sub-set of the populations identified by the Task Force. It is okay to include other partners who have relevant experience or expertise in a required qualification. Each qualification can have up to two partners listed in the chart labeled “4. Required Qualifications and Project Partners.”

Q: Is a letter of commitment sufficient from a Workforce Development Board and Career Center for the proposal?

A: Workforce Development Boards and Career Centers are recommended partners. They are not required to be listed as partners. A letter of commitment or signed MOA is sufficient to demonstrate their role as a member of the partnership. However, if they are not a member of the partnership, applicants must include a summary of their conversations with their local workforce development board and career center at the bottom of the chart (#4) on page 20.

Q: The RFQ lists 3 Required Partners: a community-based organization experienced with serving the target population, and two Massachusetts-based businesses. So I understand those 3 partners must be chosen and identified in the RFQ response. My question is in regards to the other partners that we list in Section 4, pages 19-20. These are not necessarily the required partners listed above. **Do we need to have an identified and established partner for each of the “qualifications” listed in Section 4?**

A: In the chart labeled “4. Required Qualifications and Project Partners,” you are required to describe which partner has the relevant experience or expertise for each of the required qualifications listed in the chart. Each qualification must have at least one and no more than two partners listed. Partners may be listed under more than one qualification category.

Q: **Can we use the “planning period” to further refine and identify some of these partners?** For example, for the partner(s) that will be conducting the workforce training, can we list a couple partners we are thinking about/having discussion with, and then decide which one to go with during the planning period, or do we need to have the training partner already chosen and identified in the RFQ response? This question would relate to any of the “qualifications” listed in that section.

A: Yes, you need to have the training partner identified in the RFQ response. The Program Design phase may be used to refine the specific roles and functions of each partnership member, but keep in mind that each partner’s commitments, roles and activities must be provided either through a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or through the submission of separate letters of commitment. This includes their specific roles/responsibilities in the Program Design phase and the experience they have with serving in this capacity.

Target Occupation

Q: There is no stated definition of the four occupations in the RFQ. In terms of **Home Health Aide**, can this title cover aides who are employed in the home, such as Personal Care Attendants?

A: The definition of Home Health Aide for the purposes of this RFQ is: Home Health Aides provide hands-on personal care, simple procedures which are an extension of, and as delegated by, the Registered Nurse or Speech, Occupational or Physical Therapist. Services include assistance in ambulation or exercises, and assistance in administering medications that are ordinarily self-administered.

Q: Is there any flexibility in the identifying an occupation outside of the four named in the grant? Specifically Personal Care Attendant which does qualify as an occupation serving those outside of the acute care settings in home and community based care.

A: No.

Q: Is the Medical Administrative Assistant position an acceptable occupation within the Health Care Jobs Pipeline focus?

A: Yes, it is an alternative job title for Medical Assistant.

Q: We have a program that trains students in health care IT – both electronic records management & networking and biomedical engineering technicians (maintaining complex medical equipment). Are these career paths you envision supporting with this grant, or is the focus on medical assistant roles?

A: The four occupations this RFQ targets are: Medical Assistant, Certified Nursing Assistant, Home Health Aide and Recovery Coach (substance abuse and addiction services).

Target Trainee

Q: In the RFQ, it states “Applicants that propose to serve all populations identified by the Task Force will not be viewed favorably.” The targeted populations are “African-Americans/blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Americans, people with disabilities, **and/or** Gulf War Era II Veterans...”. My question is- How can it be ‘**and**’ when it is stated that “an applicant’s proposed target population must be a specific sub-set of the populations identified by the Task Force...” We are interpreting that as meaning only ONE of the above listed populations can be addressed in the RFQ. Is this correct?

Q: On page 3 of the RFQ, “An applicant’s proposed target population must be a specific sub-set of the populations identified by the Task Force...”, does our group choose just 1 subset? How is Commonwealth Corporation defining subset? Would serving 2 subsets of a population be viewed favorably? And finally, would we want to propose serving minority women or would we want to further define that to say Latino women (as an example)?

A: You must identify a specific target population to be served through the program. However, please keep in mind whichever target population(s) you select must be unemployed, have limited or no attachment to the labor force within the last 3-5 years, have significant barriers to gaining and retaining employment, and be likely to benefit from a training and placement program that incorporates all of the elements listed on in the RFQ. Applicants should describe their proposed target population in their response.

Given your example: an appropriate target group could be African American and Latino women with disabilities.

Q: On page 3 of the RFQ in the target population section it says “*Have limited or no attachment to the labor force within the last 3-5 years.*” **Would this include underemployed?**

Q: The participant population is aimed toward unemployed or out of the workforce for at least 3 years. Are there any chances of opening it up to underemployed?

A: No. An applicant’s proposed target population must be a specific sub-set of the populations identified by the Task Force and must be unemployed, have limited or no attachment to the labor force

within the last 3-5 years, have significant barriers to gaining and retaining employment, and be likely to benefit from a training and placement program that incorporates all of the elements listed on page 3 of the RFQ.

Q: Do you have a profile for who would fall under chronically unemployed adults?

A: Please see section #1B; Target population on page 3 of the RFQ.

Q: Can ex-offenders be considered as a target population?

A: Yes, as long as they also meet the other required criteria listed in the RFQ.

Budget and Grant Award

Q: Can grant funds be used towards program participant stipends?

A: Grant funds designated for the Program Design phase (up to \$25,000) cannot be used for participant stipends. Implementation grant funds can be used for participant stipends.

Q: Just to confirm I am reading it right, the expectation is to submit a PLANNING budget (utilizing the budget template, for “up to” \$25k) and then submit an implementation budget at the end of the program design phase for the remaining amount. Am I correct in that?

A: Yes, Commonwealth Corporation anticipates awarding a maximum amount of \$205,000 each to three (3) partnerships to engage in program design activities and subsequent program implementation. Of this amount, partnerships may request up to \$25,000 for program design activities. At the conclusion of the program design phase, each of these partnerships will be required to submit an implementation plan, detailed design, and budget for up to the remaining amount.

Q: Is the intent of the Commonwealth Corporation to determine whether a partnership has the capacity to implement such a program and so the budget we will submit will only cover the activities during the program design period (April-June, 2017)? So, this budget can be up to \$25,000?

A: Yes, (see answer above).

Q: When we submit our proposal should we include BOTH the \$25,000 for planning and the \$180,000 for implementation on separate budget sheets?

A: No, your response to the RFQ should include ONLY a budget for the Program Design phase.

Q: Partnerships are not required to contribute leveraged (match) funds and resources, but is there an expectation of the extent of \$ employers should invest in their participation in the project?

A: No.

Other

Q: Is there a minimum/maximum number of employment hours that qualifies as a successful “unsubsidized job?”

Q: Many of the jobs offered in health care, particularly at the entry level, are part time in nature. While we would work toward full time placements, will Comm Corp accept employment in part time positions as positive outcomes?

A: We expect participants who complete training and begin employment to be able to work regular part time hours of 20-30 hrs. /week at a minimum. However, if you believe that work week is not realistic for your target population please provide an explanation in your application.

Q: My organization does not accept MA Health as an insurance source. Am I still an eligible applicant for the grant funding to support training and employment for Recovery Coaches?

A: Yes. The source of funding to pay for Recovery Coach (substance abuse and addiction services) once they are hired will not impact an applicant's eligibility for this grant.

Q: Do One-Stop Career Centers perform CORI checks and/or otherwise screen potential job candidates? If so, are they able to share information on a candidate's background with prospective employers?

A: One-Stop Career Centers may provide this service. However, any applicant for this grant should have a detailed conversation with career center staff to explore what services they may provide as part of the partnership, what information they are able to legally share and what the cost might be for the service.

Q: Can you define "limited" as included in the following statement – "Have limited or no attachment to the labor force within the last 3-5 years"?

Q: Is there a more specific definition of "limited or no attachment to the labor force in the past three to five years"? For example, would a person who works only 5 to 10 hours per week due to the structure of the job or other family or skill related issues fit this definition?

A: There is no specific definition. However, please keep in mind that in addition to having limited or no attachment to the labor force within the last 3-5 years, your proposed target population must be a specific sub-set of the populations identified by the Task Force and must be unemployed, have significant barriers to gaining and retaining employment, and be likely to benefit from a training and placement program that incorporates all of the elements listed on page 3 of the RFQ. Applicants should describe their proposed target population in their response.

Q: Can you have two health care business members in your partnership – a home health agency and a long term care facility – and train individuals using a combined home health aide/certified nursing assistant curriculum. Then, trained individuals will have the choice of working in either or both a home health agency and a long term care facility.

A: Please see **RFQ p4 Section C**: "...we will consider applications from partnerships in which each of the health care business members employs both CNAs and Home Health Aides and, therefore, are proposing to target both of these occupations. However, any partnership proposing to target both CNAs and Home Health Aides is advised that we will not support a program design that provides a separate program track for each of these occupations."

Q: Can one large employer that has multiple departments in different locations and sectors count as more than one employer?

A: We would need to know more about the hiring practices of this employer. For example, if all new hires are conducted by a single HR department, then for the purposes of this RFQ, we would consider this organization as a single employer. If each department sets their own hiring standards and practices

and conducts their own hiring, then they would be considered multiple employers for the purpose of this RFQ.

Q: Is there going to be a bidders' conference for this one?

A: No, we are not hosting a bidder's conference for this RFQ. We encourage potential applicants and interested parties to send in questions and to sign up to be notified when responses are posted. Sign up here: <https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/328677>

Q: My question is whether employers who self-fund for unemployment are eligible for this grant.

A: Yes

Q: What happens if the person recruited, trained and ultimately hired by the nursing facility or other provider leaves before 30 days, i.e. would they *lose* funds that they had invested in that employee using their own funds? (since would not meet required measure of employment outcome to receive \$ from Comm Corp)

A: Commonwealth Corporation utilizes a cost reimbursement line item budget. Budgets developed in partnership with Commonwealth Corporation during the design period (to cover implementation costs) will establish how each grantee will be paid during the implementation of the training grant. However, if grantees are not meeting their performance goals, Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to reduce the grant amount.