FY21 Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program RFP:

Question & Answers (Updated 3/31/21)

Q: Does MA Department of Correction qualify as a eligible program partner?

**A: Yes**

Q: Who are the required members of a partnership?

A:

* 1. **A minimum of two businesses with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents in the target occupation(s).**
	2. **A training provider with demonstrated expertise in providing occupational skills training integrated with work readiness/soft skills development and placing individuals in the target occupation**;
	3. **Community-based social service providers with a demonstrated expertise in engaging and supporting returning citizens in succeeding in transitioning to the community and to employment** **as evidenced by a proven track record of practicing cultural competent care in the community;**
	4. **The regional MassHire Workforce Board and/or MassHire Career Center**
	5. **The House of Corrections or Department of Correction facility in the region**

Q: Are past and/or current implementation grantees eligible to apply?

**A:** **Yes. The following organizations are eligible to apply as lead applicants on behalf of a partnership, provided that they have previously been awarded either a** **Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program Implementation grant, or a Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program Planning Grant from Commonwealth Corporation:**

* + **Community-based organizations, particularly those with a track record of serving returning citizens**
	+ **Non-profit education, training, or other service providers**
	+ **MassHire Workforce Board**
	+ **MassHire Career Center,**
	+ **House of Corrections/Department of Correction facility**

Q: Can a partnership engage in an MOU with a DOC partner that is already engaged with another partnership?

**A: Yes.**

Q: Are current implementation grantees eligible to apply for implementation funds? The grant start and end dates overlap.

**A: Yes. Organizations are eligible to apply as lead applicants on behalf of a partnership, provided that they have previously been awarded either a Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program Implementation grant, or a Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program Planning Grant from Commonwealth Corporation. If a current implementation grantee is awarded a new FY21 Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program award, these will be considered a separate contract with separate deliverables.**

Q: In the instructions for Attachment 2, Program Application Narrative Form, item 9, it states that proposed services should be delivered within the duration of the grant and gives the date of June 30, 2021. Elsewhere the end date of the grant is shown as June 30, 2022.  Is this 2021 date a typo?

A: **The June 30th, 2021 date is a typo. Services should be delivered and outcomes achieved by the end of the grant award period, June 30th, 2022**

Q: Is there a minimum number of participants to be served by the grant?

**A: There is no minimum number of required participants to be served by the grant, however final proposed service levels of a successful applicant are subject to negotiation during contracting.**

Q: Can you include more than one region’s House of Correction and or Department of Correction facility as partners?

**A:** **We understand returning citizens may transition back into communities other than the location of their detention. An MOU & point person are required with any referral DOC/HOC. Actual services & business placements should take place within the partnership region, regardless of the location of the referring detention facility.**

Q: Can you submit the previous MOA’s from the Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program FY’20 Appropriation: Program Design Capacity Building Grant?

**A:** **MOA’s should be up to date, current, and reflective of an agreement in place for the timeframe of the FY21 procurement.**

Q: Is there a standard MOA form? If not what specifically are you looking for in the MOA?

**A: A Memorandum of Agreement must be included and labeled as Attachment 5. These should articulate the relationship between the lead applicant and the required partners listed in Section 2 of the RFP. Two example versions are included- for a business partner and correctional facility partner as Attachment 5. Programs are expected to refer to the provided examples for guidance while crafting their agreements. Applicants can merge all MOU’s together into one document with each entity sign off if desired.**

Q: Are MOA’s for the original listed partners only?

**A: A Memorandum of Agreement must be included and labeled as Attachment 5. These should articulate the relationship between the lead applicant and the required partners listed in Section 2 of the RFP.**

Q: Is there a limit to the % of the grant with respect to projected staffing costs?

**A: Applicants may not request more than $138,888 for this procurement. Applicants must propose realistic, attainable job placement goals, subject to review & approval by the proposal review committee. Applicants must explain why the proposed placement rate and cost per placement is appropriate for the target population and the proposed program. This explanation should cover an enrollment and training schedule that allows for 30-day retention of placements in the pre-identified industry sector by June 30, 2022. Applicants should design a budget that will ensure the above-mentioned outcomes are feasible and realistic.**

Q: Is there a limit or recommended % on grant funded housing, or transportation?

**A: Applicants may not request more than $138,888 for this procurement. Applicants must propose realistic, attainable job placement goals, subject to review & approval by the proposal review committee. Applicants must explain why the proposed placement rate and cost per placement is appropriate for the target population and the proposed program. This explanation should cover an enrollment and training schedule that allows for 30-day retention of placements in the pre-identified industry sector by June 30, 2022. Applicants should design a budget that will ensure the above-mentioned outcomes are feasible and realistic.**

Q: Regarding the target population, if they are not interested in our proposed ‘trade’ pathways, our plan is to utilize the Career Center, can we charge Career Center services to the grant?

**A: Funds may be used for costs associated with delivering training and placement activities, and other services to prepare participants transitioning from a department of correction or house of corrections facility, for success in the pre-identified targeted occupation(s), to optimize opportunities for participant learning and career development, and to achieve placement for participants within your identified industry sector. Funds may be used to support the following:**

* + - **Outreach, recruitment, assessment, and selection**
		- **Support services needed to ensure participants’ success, such as transportation, childcare, textbooks, uniforms, and tools**
		- **Training delivery, including classroom and formal on-the-job training**
		- **Stipends for participating in training and work experience**
		- **Staff time for partnership and program coordination, job development, case management and data entry**
		- **Covid-19 related expenses to ensure safe and effective program delivery during the pandemic**

**Applicants must provide a post-release, cohort based, occupational skills training and placement program that addresses the employers’ workforce needs, prepare participants for success in the targeted occupation(s), optimizes opportunities for participant learning and career development, and will result in participants’ placement in the target occupation(s). Applicants must propose an enrollment and training schedule that allows for 30-day retention of placements in the pre-identified industry sector by June 30, 2022. Funds may not be allocated to expenses not directly related to your proposed industry sector/placement plan outlined in your application.**

Q: We are considering the addition of one or two area Community Action Agencies under the ‘Community Based Organizations’ category. Both agencies offer a variety of services to qualified individuals including: housing, food/nutrition, early childhood care, energy, and financial ed.). Please advise if this within the bounds of the grant.

**A: Partnership members are additionally expected to have demonstrated capacity to recruit and partner with racially & culturally diverse, community-reflective program participants and organizations to address the needs of the target population. Eligible lead applicants must also demonstrate that they have a relationship with an organization that has access to and will provide referrals to the program. The partners must sign a Memorandum of Agreement and provide a proposed client/cohort flow of services. These organizations must include partners from each of the following categories:**

* **A minimum of two businesses with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents in the target occupation(s).**
* **A training provider with demonstrated expertise in providing occupational skills training integrated with work readiness/soft skills development and placing individuals in the target occupation.**
* **Community-based social service providers with a demonstrated expertise in engaging and supporting returning citizens in succeeding in transitioning to the community and to employment as evidenced by a proven track record of practicing culturally competent care in the community.**
* **The regional MassHire Workforce Board and/ or MassHire Career Center**
* **The House of Corrections or Department of Correction facility in the region**

Q: We have been in discussion with a union regarding their Apprenticeship/Training program over the last month, they were not part of the original grant application, do we need and MOA for this organization, as well as the employer that we are in the progress of obtaining commitment?

**A: A Memorandum of Agreement must be included and labeled as Attachment 5. These should articulate the relationship between the lead applicant and the required partners listed in Section 2 of the RFP. Please note the FY21 Implementation funds are a new grant application, separate from your planning award. Any new partners that fall under the category of “required partners”, listed in section 2 of the RFP should have an up-to-date MOA included in your application.**

Q: We are looking to expand the originally listed ‘target occupations’ is this acceptable?

**A: Applicants must provide training and placement services that prepare individuals to meet a regional business’ skill need and work readiness requirements for in demand occupation(s). Applicants may either propose to train individuals for an occupation in a single industry sector or for an occupation that exists in multiple industry sectors. In either case, applicants should identify a specific occupation to be targeted and design a training program that prepares individuals for that specific occupation- we recognize that there are occupations with identical required skills and credentials for entry. Applicants may propose to train individuals for multiple target occupations if the required skills and credentials are identical and can be attained through participation in the same training program. Using the document attached as Attachment 6 of the RFP, applications must identify a target region and include information about unmet demand for workers for the target occupation. This information must come from regional employers and must include current and projected vacancies and any projected increase in demand for the targeted occupation and skills, as well as credentials required for entry, to demonstrate that the occupation is of critical importance to employers in the region and that there is a need for the development of a training and placement program.**

Q:  Is there a special designation for a CBO versus a non-profit?  As a 501c3 are we eligible to apply or do I need secure some type of Community Based Org certificate?

**A. There is not currently a required CBO certificate, but an agency seeking the role of CBO partner would be able to demonstrate a track record of providing services to the target population.**

**The following organizations are eligible to apply as lead applicants on behalf of a partnership, provided that they have** **previously been awarded either a Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program Implementation grant, or a Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program Planning Grant from Commonwealth Corporation\*:**

1. **Community-based organizations, particularly those with a track record of serving returning citizens**
2. **Non-profit education, training, or other service providers**
3. **MassHire Workforce Board**
4. **MassHire Career Center,**
5. **House of Corrections/Department of Correction facility**

**Required Partnership Members: Collectively, the members of the partnership must have demonstrated experience, success and current capacity in providing occupationally focused training and placement programs for returning citizens reentering the community, including support services, education, training, and employment services. Partnership members are additionally expected to have demonstrated capacity to recruit and partner with racially & culturally diverse, community-reflective program participants and organizations to address the needs of the target population. Eligible lead applicants must also demonstrate that they have a relationship with an organization that has access to and will provide referrals to the program. The partners must sign a Memorandum of Agreement and provide a proposed client/cohort flow of services. (See Attachment 5 for details). These organizations must include partners from each of the following categories:**

**1. A minimum of two businesses with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents in the target occupation(s).**

**2. A training provider with demonstrated expertise in providing occupational skills training integrated with work readiness/soft skills development and placing individuals in the target occupation.**

**3. Community-based social service providers with a demonstrated expertise in engaging and supporting returning citizens in succeeding in transitioning to the community and to employment as evidenced by a proven track record of practicing culturally competent care in the community.**

**4. The regional MassHire Workforce Board and/ or MassHire Career Center**

**5. The House of Corrections or Department of Correction facility in the region**

Q: Is a Proposer allowed to use the same individuals or institutions for letters of support or MOA’s when they have previously provided these documents to other applicants responding to the RFP?

**A: Yes, so long as the partner agency/institution is in agreement that the arrangement does not create a conflict.**

Q. Is there an opportunity for first time entrants to this type of funding?

**A. Commonwealth Corporation plans to release another request for proposals in winter 2021 to support new partnerships to engage in the design of occupationally focused training and placement programs for returning citizens. $100,000 will be available for this program, applicants may request up to $20,000. Successful applicants that become funded grantees would then be eligible to apply for FY22 Implementation funds in the spring.**

Q: Can the total budget exceed the maximum grant amount for $138,888 given that additional revenue is coming from other sources in either cash or in-kind?

**A: $1,250,000 is available for this grant program. Applicants may not request more than $138,888. Submitted budgets should reflect the total amount requested by the applicant from this funding source.**

Q: Is it acceptable to have one start date and end date for job training classes rather than enrolling individuals each quarter for the duration of the grant cycle?

**A: Please fill out the outcome chart as indicated on the form. You may use the section titled “Explanation” at the bottom of the form to provide any context around your quarterly goals you feel would be useful.**

Q: Is there a difference between a MOA and a Letter of Support or are they both the same document?

**A: A Memorandum of Agreement must be included and labeled as Attachment 5 of the applicant’s response. These should articulate the relationship between the lead applicant and the required partners listed in Section 2 of the RFP. Two example versions are included- for a business partner and correctional facility partner. Programs are expected to refer to the provided examples for guidance while crafting their agreements. Applicants can merge all MOU’s together into one document with each entity sign off if desired.**

**When it comes to HOC/DOC partnerships, successful applicants will demonstrate that they have relationships with key personnel at their relevant HOC/DOC facility. Applicants should include specific names of personnel who have committed to facilitating a continuum of services for clients transitioning out of the facilities. Evidence of such existing relationships should include a signed MOA, signed letters of support, and a work plan describing client flow/service delivery behind the wall. HOC/DOC partnerships should provide both an MOU and a Letter of Support from the institution or key personnel.**