

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
YOUTH MENTORING CONTRACTOR(S)**

Requested by: Lorain County Workforce Development Agency
42495 North Ridge Road
Elyria, Ohio 44035

The Lorain County Workforce Development Agency (LCWDA) is seeking qualified vendors to deliver **Mentoring Services** to eligible youth in Lorain County under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funded Youth EDGE Program. Through this RFP, LCWDA seeks to build and maintain a network of mentors, brought on as independent subcontractors, to provide youth development and workforce preparation services to young individuals who meet federal income eligibility criteria, specifically through the provision of one-on-one **Mentoring Services**.

OVERVIEW

The overall mission and goals of the WIA Youth EDGE Program are to:

- Connect eligible youth with services that remediate their basic skills deficiencies
- Facilitate their completion of secondary or alternative schooling leading to attainment of a High School Diploma or GED
- Transition youth to post-secondary studies
- Connect youth with meaningful employment promoting self-sufficiency

Specifically, Mentoring Services are delivered to youth to:

- Increase motivation toward the achievement of WIA Youth EDGE Program goals
- Improve self-confidence and self-esteem
- Enhance engagement in school
- Establish career and life goals

The purpose of Mentoring is to build positive, supportive relationships between youth and adults and to provide positive adult role models for youth in order to increase the success of program participants in the achievement of WIA Youth Program goals.

The LCWDA WIA Youth Mentoring services will be offered to youth in the following categories:

- 1) Youth who are 16 or older, are in school, but are at-risk of not finishing high school;
- 2) Youth who are 16 - 21 years old who have dropped out of school and have not earned a GED;
- 3) Youth who are out of school, have successfully completed high school or GED, and desire to pursue further learning activities, but lack the financial resources or guidance to do so.

LCWDA WIA Youth participants are likely to possess one or more of the following barriers:

- Basic Literacy Skills Deficient
- School Dropout
- Homeless/Runaway
- Runaway
- Pregnant or Parenting
- Offender
- Disabled
- Limited English Skills
- Incarcerated Parent
- Faces serious barriers to finding employment

Mentors can expect to work with youth from any or all of these categories, and who face one or more of the barriers listed.

LCWDA is seeking individuals possessing the professional skills and personal attributes making them well suited to serve as positive role models and have an affirmative impact on youth, specifically in guiding them toward success in school, at work, and as community members. Individuals eligible to submit a response to this RFP include:

- Professionals holding a post-secondary degree in a field of study conducive to the provision of services to youth, including, but not limited to: Social Work, Child and Adolescent Development, Education, Guidance and Counseling.
- Applications may be considered from individuals not possessing the specified post-secondary credentials, but who can demonstrate significant professional experience delivering services to adolescents and youth
- Agencies and Organizations with existing mentoring programs are eligible to apply. Mentors employed through an Agency or Organization will be subject to all requirements and billing parameters set forth in this RFP

Individual Mentors must possess the following qualifications, skills and abilities:

- Experience working with at-risk youth
- Demonstrated knowledge of community resources available to youth
- Personal capacity and availability to commit to long-term mentoring relationships
- Ability and willingness to meet with youth in a variety of settings
- Ability and availability to attend occasional in-service training and/or group activities with other mentors and youth participants
- Desire to make a difference
- Proven good professional judgment

Additionally, a background check **will be required** for all individuals who are being considered prior to contracts being approved. The cost associated with the background check will be the sole responsibility of the proposer and is not reimbursable through the contract that may be established with LCWDA.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

The WIA Youth EDGE Program Mentors provide guidance and support to eligible participants assigned to them by LCWDA. Mentors will be paid at a rate of \$150.00 per month per participant served. In addition, Mentors can be reimbursed up to \$10.00 weekly per participant served for any incidental costs (e.g. food, event fees, etc...) that were directly provided for the participant. All incidental costs must be supported by a receipt and approved by LCWDA.

A Mentor will be assigned no more than 5 participants concurrently.

The Director of LCWDA, assisted by the staff of the WIA Youth Program, will provide overall direction to the Mentors. Mentors will be expected to attend occasional meetings with LCWDA staff, which may include meeting with other Mentors who are delivering services, to provide input and feedback LCWDA needs to continually improve the services provided. Mentors will also be encouraged to attend occasional functions that are coordinated and scheduled for the participants of the WIA Youth EDGE Program.

It is expected that the Mentors will provide the following with each participant during each month:

- At least 8 hours of mentoring contact with each participant, consisting of:
 - **PRIMARY SERVICES:** Consisting of 1-on-1 in-person sessions, typically, but not exclusively, one per week, AND
 - **APPURTANENT SERVICES:** Consisting of communication via telephone, e-mail, text, electronic media in preparation for, or as a follow up to Primary Services, May include time spent scheduling mentoring sessions, updates between visits, etc... Appurtenant Services may constitute no more than 25% of monthly mentoring.
- Complete thorough documentation of all mentoring activities for each participant
- Provide input to LCWDA staff pertaining to participant's progress toward achieving the goals that have been developed by the Youth staff who assigned the participant(s) to the mentoring service, as well as identification of any barriers or issues that may be encountered through the interaction with the participant(s)
- Attend occasional meetings with LCWDA Youth Staff and/or group sessions with other mentoring participants and mentors

To reply to this request for proposals, please provide the following information:

1. A cover sheet listing proposer's name, address, phone number and e-mail address, along with the signature of the proposer.
2. A detailed narrative which demonstrates the individual proposer's or agencies experience and qualifications to deliver the services as outlined in the RFP.
3. Current resume; for agencies/organizations applying the resume(s) of key personnel who will be delivering mentoring services must be provided.
4. Provide any additional information, not specifically addressed above, which may be used as an evaluation tool in the selection of a vendor for this service.

Additional information:

1. Proposals must be typed. Responses must correspond to the numbered items requested above.
2. Each proposal must be signed on the proposal cover sheet by a representative authorized to commit to the activity described in the proposal.
3. The proposal and required documents must be returned (either in mail or electronically) to:

Mike Longo, Director
Lorain County Workforce Development Agency
42495 North Ridge Road, Elyria, Ohio 44035
e-mail: mlongo@loraincounty.us

Proposer's should also submit any questions about this RFP to the e-mail listed above
(No verbal questions will be accepted).

4. All costs directly or indirectly related to the preparation of this proposal will be the sole responsibility of the proposer. This RFP does not constitute an offer. Acceptance of a proposal does not commit LCWDA to award a contract.
5. The Lorain County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any informalities or irregularities if it is deemed in the best interest of Lorain County to do so. The award of a contract is based on available funding.
6. LCWDA may choose to conduct interviews prior to final vendor selection.
7. A written notice will be sent to all vendors submitting a proposal informing them of the selection or rejection of their proposal.
8. LCWDA will enter into a contract with approved vendors for the period of one year. Contracts will automatically be renewed at each anniversary for the same terms upon agreement of both parties, ongoing need for the service, successful contract performance and the availability of funds.
9. Either party may terminate the agreement after giving 30 day written notice of termination to the other party.