

**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

**DATE:** February 15, 2011

**SUBJECT:** RFQ #11-02 REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR  
COHORT BASED WORKFORCE TRAINING IN HEALTHCARE

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) is a nonprofit workforce “think tank” and grant-making organization whose mission is to support a strong economy and ensure the ability of each person to achieve self-sufficiency. To learn more about the WDC, please visit the WDC website at [www.seakingwdc.org](http://www.seakingwdc.org).

## **BACKGROUND**

In October 2010 the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC) was selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as a grant-funded partner in its national five-year Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG) initiative. The WDC is seeking qualified training partners to implement a collaborative effort under this initiative that improves educational and employment outcomes in the healthcare field for TANF recipients and other low-income adults and youth in King County. To this end, the WDC is issuing RFQ #11-02 to solicit qualifications from training providers for **existing** training that meets the purpose, goals, scope, and requirements outlined below. The WDC is also issuing a companion solicitation, RFP #11-03, seeking proposals for the development of new curricula and approaches to address gaps in current training offerings. Eligible applicants may choose to submit responses under either or both solicitations.

## **PURPOSE AND GOALS**

The WDC seeks qualifications from multiple training institutions, such as community or technical colleges, 4-year universities, registered apprenticeship programs, and other providers of training that have the expertise and capacity to quickly implement cohort-based training<sup>1</sup> that helps individuals prepare for and attain jobs in the healthcare field. The purpose of the training is to increase: (1) enrollment by the target population in training that results in an employer-recognized credential; (2) training retention and completion rates; (3) rates of training-related job placement and retention, and (4) rates of return to training for successive levels of skill development and employment advancement.

## **TARGET POPULATION**

This HHS-funded project is focused on low-income adults and youth across the following priority categories:

**1<sup>st</sup> Priority:** Current TANF recipients

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<sup>1</sup> Cohort-based training allows an entire class of job seekers to be recruited and enrolled in training as a group. Cohort training enhances interpersonal interaction, can create strong group identification and increase support, and often prepares students for professions using internship models.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Priority:** Other low-income adults and youth in households with income less than 175% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Priority:** Entry-level incumbent workers and others with household income above 175% FPL with circumstances that would allow them to benefit from this opportunity (e.g., limited basic and/or English language skills, unstable work history, disability, single-parent status, etc.)

**PROJECT SCOPE AND TIMELINE**

Demographics and training needs for those within the target population are diverse, including individuals with limited literacy/English language skills and/or academic history, little or no work experience, etc., as well as those with previous post-secondary education and employment history and entry-level incumbent workers. The WDC is seeking a broad range of training options that will respond to the diverse needs of the target population, but with a particular emphasis on existing innovative strategies that create more opportunity for enrollment in and completion of training for low-income individuals with multiple barriers to successful participation. Accordingly, the WDC is seeking to purchase training at three levels as described below:

<b>Foundational Training</b>	Creates an access point or bridge to entry-level healthcare training for those with low-level basic skills and little positive academic experience. All content is contextualized to healthcare occupations and builds universal skills such as reading, writing, basic math and IT literacy.
<b>Entry-level Training</b>	Short-term training that leads to an employer-recognized credential for occupations such as those listed below. Entry-level training is accessible with no prior higher-education experience and may be offered with support such as that provided through the I-BEST approach.
<b>Advancement-level Training</b>	“Next level” healthcare training leading to an employer-recognized credential for occupations such as those listed below. Advancement training may also be offered with customized support and packaged with required pre-requisites.

This may include training for a broad array of healthcare occupations, including entry-level training such as certified nursing assistant, home care aide, phlebotomy/clinical lab, medical office clerk, physical therapist aide, etc., and more advanced training such as medical assistant, pharmacy technician, acute care nursing assistant, licensed practical nurse, medical lab tech, physical therapist assistant, medical secretary/health unit coordinator, other technicians/technologists, etc. Training described above at all levels—but especially the foundational level--may also incorporate career exploration/exposure, “life skills,” and work readiness, as well as robust strategies to support learning and successful training completion for those with limited academic skills/history.

The focus of this RFQ is to identify training that is currently developed and available for purchase, and aligns with one of the training levels described above and overall project goals. It is the WDC’s intent to purchase the first training cohorts under this HHS-funded project between March and September of 2011, and expects funding to be available for additional cohort purchases in subsequent years of the project. The WDC is also particularly interested in training options with clear articulation to next level training, including strategies that “package” pre-requisite coursework to expedite training and employment progression. As mentioned above, **training providers may also propose curriculum redesign, new**

**approaches to instructional delivery, or new curriculum development to address gaps in training offerings and/or articulation under a companion solicitation, RFP #11-03.**

Training providers funded under this solicitation will work closely with project “Navigators” who will determine participant eligibility for the HHS-funded project. Navigators will work with training providers to assess fit for particular training programs and support training retention and completion, as well as successful transition from training to employment. Training providers will also be expected to work closely with DSHS to track attendance and communicate an education and training plan for TANF recipients participating in training as is currently the practice with WorkFirst students.

**ELIGIBILITY**

King County training institutions, such as community or technical colleges, 4-year universities, registered apprenticeship programs, and other providers of healthcare training.

**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Training institutions interested in this RFQ should respond using the following format:

**1. Identifying Information**

- a. Name of institution, address, phone & fax number, email address & web page URL (if applicable), and name/title/contact information of lead representative.

**2. Program Design**

- a. Please describe in detail the specific training/classes (curriculum, intended learning outcome(s), course work, program length, work-based learning components, such as clinical placement/internship/externship, etc.) that meet the intent of this RFQ. *[Note: Applicants may submit more than one program that pertains to this RFQ if applicable.]*
- b. Please indicate whether the training is at the foundational, entry, or more advanced level (see description on p. 2).
- c. Please describe any flexibility the program has in terms of schedule and instructional delivery, including flexibility regarding the location (e.g., campus, community-based location, etc.) where training is delivered (particularly in the case of foundational training).
- d. Please describe how the training meets the needs of the target population, and, if applicable, the particular segment of the target population the training is designed to serve.
- e. Please describe how you have assessed industry demand for your program’s graduates in the near term.
- f. Please describe the extent to which employers have been involved in the development and/or validation of your curriculum. Please also describe how you have ensured input from various decision-making levels within industry (e.g., HR, administrative/CEO, etc.)
- g. Describe the certificate/credential(s)/licensure that will be attained by program graduates and how it is recognized by employers (or, in the case of foundational level training, what the expected training outcome is and what the next step(s) are for training completers).
- h. Describe the occupation(s) the training prepares successful completers to obtain, which types of employers are hiring for that occupation (e.g.,

hospitals/acute care, clinics, community/public health, long-term care, etc.), and particular strategies to enhance work readiness and competitiveness of program completers.

- i. Indicate how the proposed training articulates to next level training, including specifics about which next level training(s).
- j. Describe the track record of each program: number served annually, completion rate, credential rate, job attainment rate, and average wage upon job placement.
- k. Include a timeline and the planned number of students that could be placed in training programs/classes, i.e., how soon/when the training could be offered, minimum/maximum/ideal number of students per cohort, etc.

### **3. Cost Proposal**

- a. For each training program proposed, please use **Attachment A** to detail pertinent costs including instruction, tuition, other student costs, facilities costs, etc. ***Please note that no funds released under this solicitation may be used to pay participant wages of any kind.***
- b. In the **budget narrative**, please provide detail for each of the funding categories and also describe the necessary enrollments for the course to qualify for state-funded support of the instructor portion of the training, if applicable.

Please limit your application to no more than four (4) pages single spaced, per proposed program excluding the required budget attachment. Please submit as many programs as you feel are appropriate given the guidelines of this RFQ. If you are interested in being considered as a potential provider of the training described in this RFQ, please submit your materials to the WDC by **5:00 pm on Wednesday, March 9, 2011.**

**Questions** may be emailed to [operations@seakingwdc.org](mailto:operations@seakingwdc.org) through **Wednesday, March 2, 2011. No phone calls please.** Questions will be posted with answers on the WDC website ([www.seakingwdc.org](http://www.seakingwdc.org)) at least weekly between issue date and due date for this solicitation.

**The WDC makes no commitment to contract with training providers responding to this solicitation, but will consider utilizing providers whose qualifications are verified through this RFQ for immediate as well as future training needs.**

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The WDC will use the following criteria to guide training selection in the immediate term:

- Employer demand (within and across segments of the healthcare industry, e.g., acute care, long-term care, community/public health, etc.)
- Current supply of training graduates in particular occupations (including supply from regular community and technical college offerings, other training providers, and special initiatives such as foundation, grant, and industry-funded cohorts)
- Fit with target population in general, and the needs of early participant enrollments in particular
- Presence of clear articulations to and from proposed training
- Demonstrated quality and track-record of training, including success of training graduates and employer support for the training
- Cost effectiveness

## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**Please send one (1) copy of your response in a sealed envelope to arrive no later than 5:00 pm, Wednesday, March 9, 2011 addressed to:**

Tess Suarez RFQ #11-02  
Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County  
2003 Western Avenue, Suite 250  
Seattle, WA 98121-2162

**Late responses will not be considered and will be returned unopened. Electronic or fax submissions will not be accepted.**

**The WDC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to accept or reject any or all items in a proposal, and to award contract(s) in whole or in part as is deemed to be in the best interests of the WDC. The WDC reserves the right to negotiate with any or all bidders on modifications to proposals and/or integration of components across proposals to achieve maximum efficiency. *Award contingent on available funds.***

**The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County  
is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of Employment And Training Services**  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities  
TDD/Washington Telecommunications Relay Service 1-800-833-6384