

Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area Request for Proposal (RFP) - One Stop Operator

Section 1. Objective

This Request for Proposal has been prepared and published by the White River Planning and Development District, Inc. (WRPDD) in accordance with the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board (NEAWDB) and Northeast Arkansas Chief Elected Officials (NEACEOs) for the purpose of soliciting proposals for One Stop Operator for the Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area.

Section 2. Background Information & General Instructions:

- a. **Federal, State, and Local Requirements:** The proposer is responsible for reading, understanding, and implementing all Federal, State, and Local requirements. The following information is provided to assist the provider and should not be considered an inclusive list.
 1. The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), Federal Regulations, Training & Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs), and other documents can be accessed on the Department of Labor's website at www.doleta.gov.
 2. The State of Arkansas' information can be accessed on the Arkansas Workforce Development Board's website at <https://www.dws.arkansas.gov/programs/workforce-innovation/>.
 3. The NEAWDB policies can be accessed on the local workforce development area's website at <https://www.neaworks.com/neawdb-documents.html>.

- b. **Service Area:** The Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Area (NEAWDA) is comprised of Clay, Craighead, Greene, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, and Randolph counties. There are currently two Arkansas Workforce Centers in the NEAWDA: Jonesboro (Comprehensive), and Paragould (Affiliate).

- c. **One Stop Operator Eligible Entities:** § 463.600 Who may operate one-stop centers?
 - (a) One-stop operators may be a single entity (public, private, or nonprofit) or a consortium of entities. If the consortium of entities is one of one-stop partners, it must include a minimum of three of the one-stop partners described in § 463.400.
 - (b) The one-stop operator may operate one or more one-stop centers. There may be more than one one-stop operator in a local area.
 - (c) The types of entities that may be a one-stop operator include:
 - (1) An institution of higher education;
 - (2) An Employment Service State agency established under the Wagner-Peyser Act;
 - (3) A community-based organization, nonprofit organization, or workforce intermediary;
 - (4) A private for-profit entity;
 - (5) A government agency;
 - (6) A Local Workforce Development Board (WDB), with the approval of the chief elected official and the Governor; or
 - (7) Another interested organization or entity, which is capable of carrying out the duties of the one-stop operator. Examples may include a local chamber of commerce or other business organization, or a labor organization.
 - (d) Elementary schools and secondary schools are not eligible as one-stop operators, except that a nontraditional public secondary school such as a night school, adult school, or an area career and technical education school may be selected.
 - (e) The State and Local WDBs must ensure that, in carrying out WIOA programs and activities, one-stop operators:
 - (1) Disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from the relationships of the operators with particular training service providers or other service providers (further discussed in 20 CFR 679.430);
 - (2) Do not establish practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term career and training services;

and (3) Comply with Federal regulations and procurement policies relating to the calculation and use of profits, including those at 20 CFR 683.295, the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR part 200, and other applicable regulations and policies.

d. **Roles of the One-Stop Operator:** § 678.620 What is the One-Stop Operator's role?

(a) At a minimum, the one-stop operator must coordinate the service delivery of required one-stop partners and service providers. Local WDBs may establish additional roles of one-stop operator, including, but not limited to: Coordinating service providers across the one-stop delivery system, being the primary provider of services within the center, providing some of the services within the center, or coordinating service delivery in a multi-center area, which may include affiliated sites. The competition for a one-stop operator must clearly articulate the role of the one-stop operator.

(b)(1) Subject to paragraph (b)(2) of this section, a one-stop operator may not perform the following functions: Convene system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan; prepare and submit local plans (as required under sec. 107 of WIOA); be responsible for oversight of itself; manage or significantly participate in the competitive selection process for one-stop operators; select or terminate one-stop operators, career services, and youth providers; negotiate local performance accountability measures; or develop and submit budget for activities of the Local WDB in the local area. (2) An entity serving as a one-stop operator, that also serves a different role within the one-stop delivery system, may perform some or all of these functions when it is acting in its other role, if it has established sufficient firewalls and conflict of interest policies and procedures. The policies and procedures must conform to the specifications in § 679.430 of this chapter for demonstrating internal controls and preventing conflict of interest. NEAWDB expects the One-Stop Operator to:

Coordination and Integration:

Facilitate collaboration among partners within the One-Stop system, ensuring services are integrated and aligned with the local workforce development plan.

Coordinate service delivery across multiple partners, including job training, employment services, and other workforce programs.

Management and Oversight:

Oversee daily operations of the One-Stop centers, ensuring that they meet performance standards and deliver high-quality services.

Monitor compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and workforce policies.

Report performance metrics and outcomes to the local workforce board.

Customer Service:

Ensure that job seekers and employers receive consistent, high-quality services.

Implement strategies to improve customer satisfaction and accessibility of services, including accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Partnership Development:

Foster and maintain relationships with community partners, businesses, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to enhance service offerings.

Engage with employers to understand their workforce needs and align services to meet those needs.

Continuous Improvement:

Identify and implement best practices for service delivery.

Analyze data and customer feedback to continuously improve operations and outcomes.

Budget and Financial Management:

Manage the budget for the One-Stop center(s), ensuring resources are allocated effectively. Ensure financial accountability and transparency in the use of funds.

Compliance and Reporting:

Ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other relevant laws and regulations. Prepare and submit required reports to the local workforce board and other governing bodies.

Staff Development and Training:

Provide training and professional development opportunities for staff to ensure they have the necessary skills to deliver services effectively.

These roles can vary depending on the specific needs and structure of the NEAWDB and the One-Stop system.

- e. **Questions and Answers:** Prospective proposers are invited to ask questions regarding this RFP by sending an email to Elizabeth Smith at liz@wrpdd.org. As questions are received from potential proposers, this page will be updated: <https://www.ncaworks.com/northeast-one-stop-procurement> Vendors will not receive notification after each update.
- f. **Timeframe for Services:** The contract duration for activities solicited by this Request for Proposal (RFP) will be twelve (12) consecutive months from October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025. An annual option up to an additional three years may be considered based upon performance, funding availability, acceptable negotiations, and approval by the NEAWDB & NEACEOs.
- g. **Timeframe for RFP process:**
 - RFP issued on August 22, 2024
 - Deadline for proposals - 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Monday, September 23, 2024
 - Evaluation of proposals by September 27, 2024.
 - Negotiation and Awarding Contract by October 1, 2024.
- h. **Submission:** Interested and qualified proposers should prepare formal, sealed proposals in response to the RFP, and should submit one (1) original and four (4) complete copies to:

WRPDD Attention: Elizabeth Smith P.O. Box 2396 Batesville, AR 72503	Ground: WRPDD Attention: Elizabeth Smith 4441 Harrison Street Batesville, AR 72501
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- i. **Federal & State Requirements:** Entities selected for the One-Stop Operator services are subrecipients of Federal funds and thus are required to follow the Uniform Guidance and all required federal, state, and the requirements herein addressed.

- j. **Determination of Cost/Price Reasonableness:** A comparative analysis may be conducted to determine if all projected costs are correctly calculated. All projected costs must be reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable.

Section 3. Proposal Instructions and Format for Responses

- a. **Format:** Each submitted proposal should include the following outlined sections to format their document. Each section must be clearly labeled and should follow the same format listed below in order to be eligible to receive the maximum number of points (Evaluation Criteria). The proposal must address all the questions and issues included in each section. Incomplete proposals may not be considered.

Each proposer should submit one (1) original and four (4) typed copies of each proposal(s). The original of each proposal should have original signatures and be clearly marked "Original" on the cover sheet. Responses should be submitted as follows:

- Typed on 8 1/2" by 11" paper,
- May be single or double-sided,
- Twelve or larger font size, and
- Pages should be sequentially numbered.

b. **Information required in the proposal:**

- Complete Attachment A. Coversheet
- Describe specific documentable experience as a One-Stop Operator.
- Describe specific documentable experience in working with WIOA or other required program partners.
- Demonstrate adequate understanding of federal/state laws and regulations.
- Describe how the organization will provide outreach to customers, partners, and employers.
- Proposal Budget items are listed below:
 - A line-item breakdown by admin and program cost is required.
 - Flat rate costs or fixed amount costs will not be considered.
 - If profit is included in the proposal, the following items are applicable but not limited to:
 - The Uniform Guidance requires that profit is reasonable and fair and that the entity conducting the competition negotiate profit separately from costs (2 CFR 200.323(b)).
 - The profit must be listed as a separate line item from other costs.
 - The NEAWDB reserves the right to cap the maximum profit potential that could be earned per performance results within the approved budget.
 - Profit must be based on the contractors' efforts and risks in achieving a performance result that typically aligns with the performance measures outlined in the Local WDB's plan.
 - The earning of profit **should not be based** on total budget, expending of the budget, and/or pass-through costs, such as tuition or fixed costs, that require minimal to no effort from the contractor nor directly achieve a performance goal.
- Disclosures & Adherences:
 - Disclose any disallowed and/or questioned costs by your organization in the past five (5) years.
 - Disclose if the organization or entity's principle employees are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation by a Federal/State department or agency.
 - Disclose if the organization is unable to be properly bonded or insured.
 - Disclose if the organization or its employees are engaged in fraud or abuse.
 - Disclose any labor union disputes or issues.

- Adherence - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and provisions of WIOA Section 188 and compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity provisions in Executive Order (EO) 11246, as amended by EO 11375 and supplemented by the requirements of 41 CFR Part 60.
- Adherence - DOL's requirements pertaining to patent rights with respect to any discovery or invention.
- Adherence - The rights of the State, DOL, or any of their authorized representatives to access any books, records, papers, or other pertinent documents for the purpose of auditing or monitoring.
- Adherence - Retention of all required records as required by Federal and State laws (for at a minimum of 3 years).
- Adherence - Compliance with all applicable standards, orders, or requirements issued under Section 306 of the Clean Air Act and Section 508 of the Clean Water Act.
- Adherence - No funds shall be used for lobbying (Byrd-Anti Lobbying Amendment).
- Adherence - Compliance with a drug free workplace requirement.
- Proposal Budget (Attachment B.)

Section 4. Evaluation of Proposals:

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be evaluated individually by WRPDD. All proposers are urged not to contact any member, other than the representative listed in the Questions and Answers section. During the evaluation process, proposers may be requested to participate in an oral interview with the evaluation team in order to clarify their proposals as deemed appropriate or necessary by the committee.

The evaluation will be based on the following evaluation criteria information. Proposals must meet a **minimum aggregate average of 70 points** from the total 100 points possible on the proposal rating sheets in order to be considered for funding. Unnecessarily elaborate proposals and brochures are not required as a response to this RFP.

Section	Points Possible
Complete Cover Sheet (Attachment A.)	0
Describe specific documentable experience as a One-Stop Operator.	15
Describe specific documentable experience in working with WIOA or other required program partners.	15
Demonstrate adequate understanding of federal/state laws and regulations.	10
Describe how the organization will provide outreach to customers, partners, and employers.	10
Disclosures and Adherences	10
Proposal Budget (Attachment B.) Additional requirements on the attachment.	40
Total Points Possible	100

Section 5. Rights & Disclaimers

The NEAWDB and NEACEOs reserve the following rights and disclaimers:

1. The right to accept or reject any or all proposals.
2. Grounds for rejecting bids include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Failure of the bid or bidder to conform to the essential requirements specified in the invitation for bid;
 - b. Failure to conform to the specifications contained or referenced in any invitation for bids unless the items offered as alternatives meet the requirements specified in the invitation;

- c. Failure to conform to a delivery schedule established in an invitation for bid, unless the invitation for bid contains provisions for acceptance of offers with alternative delivery schedules;
 - d. A bid imposing conditions that would modify the terms and conditions of the invitation for bid;
 - e. Unreasonable prices;
 - f. Bids from vendors who are on the State of Arkansas' debarment list;
 - g. Bids from vendors determined to be non-responsible bidders;
 - h. Bids from vendors determined to be not eligible;
 - i. Failure to furnish a bid guarantee when required;
 - j. Any/All bids when it is determined to be in the best interest of the program.
3. The cost of preparing the proposal is the sole responsibility of the proposer.
 4. If your organization is selected, it does not guarantee your organization a contract. The NEAWDB and the successful proposal will begin negotiations on the final contract. If negotiations do not result in a contract, the NEAWDB reserves the right to select another proposer or reissue the RFP.
 5. The NEAWDB and NEACEOs, reject any legal liability in refusing to award a contract or to pay any of the proposers' costs in preparing or submitting a response as a result of this RFP. The successful proposer must not enter into any proceedings before an official contract has been signed by the proposer, the NEAWDB, and NEACEOs.
 6. The NEAWDB and NEACEOs, will not be held financially responsible for any costs incurred prior to the signing of an official contract by both parties. If proceedings are initiated prior to signing, the negotiations will be null and void.
 7. All proposers shall receive notification as to if their proposal was successful or unsuccessful by e-mail.
 8. The successful proposer must be prepared to accept sole responsibility for performance under the contract including financial and all other liabilities.
 9. Funding is limited and is WIOA Title I funds.

Section 6. Grievance Procedures

The NEAWDB or the NEAWDB Executive Committee is the responsible authority for handling complaints or protests regarding the proposal selection process. No protest shall be accepted by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board (AWDB) until all remedies at the NEAWDB level have been exhausted. This includes, but is not limited to, false or inaccurate information, disputes, claims, protests of award, source evaluation or other matters of a contractual nature. Matters concerning violation of law shall be referred to such authority as may have proper jurisdiction.

The NEAWDB or the NEAWDB Executive Committee would like to have the opportunity to respond to any inquiry or resolve any dispute prior to the filing of an official complaint by the protester. The protester should contact, in writing, the designated contact, so that arrangements can be made for a conference between the NEAWDB or the NEAWDB Executive Committee and the protester.

Proposers not selected by this procurement process may appeal the decision by submitting, within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the NEAWDB notification of the procurement decision, a written request for debriefing to obtain information on the procurement process and how their proposal was received and ranked. The NEAWDB or the NEAWDB Executive Committee shall acknowledge receipt of the Request for Debriefing in writing within ten (10) calendar days of receipt, along with the date and time of the scheduled debriefing. The debriefing shall be scheduled as soon as possible, and no later than ten (10) calendar days from the receipt of the request for debriefing. Please note: The NEAWDB extends the courtesy of offering a debriefing to any proposer who is not selected for funding. The ten (10) day time frame must be adhered to only if a proposer is considering an appeal.

The purpose of the debriefing is to promote the exchange of information, explain the proposal evaluation system, and help unsuccessful proposers understand why they were not selected.

Proposals not selected for funding may be appealed only with respect to any fault or violation of law or regulation regarding the review process. Appeals must be filed with the NEAWDB's designee within ten (10) calendar days of the debriefing. Appeals must be in writing and sent to the following address:
S&H Systems
Attention: Mark Donovan, NEAWDB Chairman
2908 S. Caraway Road
Jonesboro, AR 72401

The appeal must include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. A description of the NEAWDB action being appealed,
2. A citation of the law or regulation allegedly violated that forms the basis for the appeal,
3. A thorough explanation of the appeal, and
4. An original signature by the appealing organization's authorized official.

Please note – appeals submitted by way of fax or e-mail will not be accepted. If the appeal does not include the minimum required information, the appealing organization will be notified and requested to respond accordingly before the deadline arrives in order for the appeal to proceed. The filing of the complete appeal within the required time frame is a condition precedent. No exception will be made to an appealing organization that does not file their appeal within the published deadline.

Upon receipt of a complete and properly submitted appeal, the NEAWDB's designee will arrange for a meeting with the appealing organization's representatives (not to exceed three persons), and the NEAWDB or NEAWDB Executive Committee. The NEAWDB or NEAWDB Executive Committee will review the protest and the written disposition and reach a decision.

The NEAWDB's or NEAWDB Executive Committee's disposition of the protest will be provided to the organization's lead representative in writing via certified mail and will be final.

RFP Coversheet One Stop Operator

Legal Name of Organization	
Federal Identification Number	
Address, City, State, Zip	
Contact Person and Title	
Phone Number	
E-mail Address	
Type of Organization	
Amount of Proposal	
Timeframe	

By signing this coversheet, you are stating that any and all documents contained within are complete, accurate, and truthful.

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Signature of Authorized Official

Date

Proposal Budget One Stop Operator

Line Item Breakdown	Admin Budget	Program Budget	Total Budget
Staff Salaries			
Staff Benefits			
Rent/Utilities			
Communications			
Postage			
Supplies			
Travel			
Equipment			
Maintenance			
Payroll Service			
Insurance			
Audit			
Total Budget			

Funding is limited and is WIOA Title I funds.