

**WorkAdvance Program
Part of the Federal Social Innovation Fund
Responses to Questions #3
Revised November 23, 2010**

Note: As stated in the WorkAdvance Request for Proposals (RFP), responses to questions, update notices, and addenda posted on the website are official updates to the RFP. It is the responsibility of the applicant to read and adhere to the responses to questions, update notices, and addenda posted on the website when responding to the RFP.

FUNDING

- 1. The RFP states that providers must assist the Mayor's Fund in raising local fundraising matches (as required by SIF). What are the specific expectations of grantees in this area? Who is responsible for the match? If the sub-grantees are required to provide a match, what is the percentage or dollar equivalent we are required to provide? Will in-kind support (e.g. space, staff, etc.) from grantees count towards the local fundraising match? Please clarify the "leveraged funding" requirement - what percentage of total program costs are providers expected to provide?**

A. The SIF stipulates an overall 3 to 1 fundraising match for the federal grant. The Mayor's Fund Collaborative will take the lead on all fundraising activities. Providers will be expected to participate in and support fundraising activities for the full program period, including the research period. The Mayor's Fund is not establishing a formal match requirement for this program, but applicants are encouraged to bring financial resources to the initiative as feasible.

All funds used for the match must be in cash, and federal funds cannot be used toward the match. Although in-kind donations cannot be used as part of the local match, in-kind contributions to the program are strongly encouraged.

- 2. Is there a maximum amount of administrative expenses allowable in the proposed budget?**

A. All services and expenses must come out of the total funding award. Proposals will be evaluated based on reasonability of costs, as described on Pg. 28 of the RFP.

- 3. Is \$1.1 million the total funding available in each city for each of the five years of the grant period, or will the amount available change from year to year? How strict is the \$1.1 million annual budget?**

A. The total funding amount provided is based on a maximum 5 year average. Proposed budget amounts may vary year to year depending on program design, need and performance. The SIF is an annual fund subject to appropriation and funding for these projects is subject to availability. The SIF is envisioned as a five year project that began in August 2010.

- 4. Should travel expenses for WorkAdvance trainings or events be included in the budget for sub-grantees located in NYC?**

A. Yes.

EVALUATION

5. **The RFP states that the Mayor’s Fund will dedicate “significant resources” to evaluation that are not included in the \$1.1 million total for each city. Can you provide more detail on these resources and how they will assist with evaluation?**

A. The MDRC team, as a member of the Mayor’s Fund Collaboration, will conduct the evaluation of WorkAdvance in all three cities. This team will be responsible for the analysis of the impacts, implementation, and benefit/cost of these programs. MDRC will be responsible for setting up the procedures for conducting random assignment to program and control groups, and training program staff in these procedures. In addition to obtaining data from the sub-grantees regarding the WorkAdvance program and baseline data, other data sources include: surveys of both program and control group members; collecting administrative records, such as earnings reported to the Unemployment Insurance system; program cost data; observing program activities, and conducting focus groups and other discussions with program staff and participants.

The Mayor’s Fund Collaborative will provide technical assistance and guidance to the WorkAdvance sub-grantees on program design and evaluation via documents, trainings, on-site visits, regular phone contact, learning network events, and other means.

6. **How will the Mayor’s Fund specifically support the grantees in operating the random assignment study?**

A. Please see pages 9-10 of the RFP. The MDRC team, in collaboration with the sub-grantee, will determine the point at which random assignment will be conducted. Program staff will collect baseline data and obtain informed consent and will provide this information to MDRC. Program staff are also responsible for recruiting enough people to be randomly assigned to program and control groups.

The MDRC team will prepare a manual for each sub-grantee describing the steps in collecting information and conducting random assignment, and will train staff on the process. It is expected that random assignment will be conducted using a web-based system developed and operated by MDRC. The MDRC team will continually monitor the process and work with sub-grantees to deal with any concerns that may arise.

The MDRC team will advise sub-grantees on the data they need to collect for each individual in the WorkAdvance program, and in consultation with the sub-grantees will schedule visits to program sites to observe the random assignment process and program operations, as well as talk with program staff and participants.

In addition, the sub-grantees budget can cover the costs of having a portion of a person’s time designated to be the research coordinator as well as staff time to conduct random assignment, and obtain the needed evaluation data.

7. **Can the control group receive any services from the grantees? If so, what services are specifically allowed? What types of services can the control group be referred to receive outside of the grantee organization?**

A. The control group should not receive services from the sub-grantee that are similar to those of the proposed WorkAdvance program. Sub-grantees may provide control group members with a list of other services available in the community that they may

access on their own. This list would not include other WorkAdvance providers in the sub-grantee's same geographic area.

8. **After the 18 months random selection period, when a total of 750 are enrolled, are the following participants served required to go through a random selection process as well?**
 - A. No. After the random assignment recruitment goals are met, the additional participants served will not go through random assignment.
9. **How do you come to a total of 1,125 to 1,275 for a single city? What are the service levels after the random assignment enrollment period?**
 - A. See Page 18 of the RFP for examples of numbers served. Sub-grantees should strive to maximize the number of successfully served individuals over the up to five years of the SIF. Full operations should be maintained after the random assignment enrollment targets are met, for as long as funding will allow.
10. **After recruitment has been completed and the names are submitted to CEO, when will we be able to start providing services to program participants?**
 - A. After agreements are signed, sub-grantees are expected to begin program operations and services to participants as soon as appropriate staffing and procedures are in place.
11. **Can applicants propose a 24 (instead of 18) month research phase, to increase the number of participants recruited and served during this phase of the initiative—without decreasing the competitiveness of their proposal?**
 - A. Recruitment for the research stage should occur over an 18 month period as specified in the RFP. MDRC will work with selected sub-grantees to ensure appropriate sample sizes are recruited, and changes may be made as needed after program operations commence.
12. **Other than the inclusion of a control group in the Research Stage, are there any other differences between the Research and Post-Research stages?**
 - A. No.

PROGRAM

13. **Will the Mayor's Fund Collaborative assist providers in coordinating policies and procedures with other government agencies (such as WIA One-Stop or TANF job programs) that deal with outreach and registration for WorkAdvance?**
 - A. Yes, the Mayor's Fund Collaborative will assist. The Mayor's Fund Collaborative and local government partners will facilitate the coordination of policies among the appropriate government agencies as feasible and appropriate.
14. **How will sub-grantees deal with WorkAdvance participants who are already enrolled in mandated (welfare to work) programs? Will they grant participation credit for job search / training activities? How would TANF or WIA funds be applied to WorkAdvance participants?**
 - A. Sub-grantees will need to work with the local TANF agency to determine the feasibility of whether program services will meet their requirements.

WIA Individual Training Account vouchers may be made available to WorkAdvance participants, pending negotiation with local WIA agencies.

As stated above, the Mayor's Fund Collaborative will assist subgrantees in coordinating policies with government agencies.

15. Will participants of other government funded employment programs be allowed to participate in WorkAdvance?

A. WorkAdvance eligibility is described on page 16 of the RFP. Participation in other programs would not render a person ineligible for WorkAdvance.

16. Can a WorkAdvance selected provider accept referrals from WIA One Stop Career Centers, TANF job centers, or other government funded programs?

A. Appropriate referrals can be accepted from any source.

17. It was our impression that sub-grantees selected in each city would operate in that particular city—would a New York City collaboration be expected to provide services in another participating city, i.e. Northeast, Ohio and Tulsa, OK? Our impression was that the evaluation was national but services would be local. Please clarify.

A. No. Sub-grantees are only expected to serve residents in their own geographic area.

18. Would the funders support a proposal to help low income, low skilled individuals complete their healthcare training and decrease drop-out rates by enrolling such individuals in comprehensive wraparound support program and/or tuition reimbursement after these individuals had completed 50% of a two year or less than two year training program?

A. The goal of WorkAdvance is to help participants increase their earnings over time, which may or may not involve occupational skills training. Services should be tailored to individual needs. Subgrantees must offer WorkAdvance services encompassing all of the core elements described in the RFP Pgs 14-16.

19. What level of service should be provided to program participants during the pilot phase? If the pilot phase is only 3 to 6 months, the level of service we will be able to provide is much more limited than the scope of the grant.

A. The services in the pilot stage should be the same as in other stages. The pilot stage is designed to allow providers time to refine practices and procedures to ensure optimal on-going operations in the research stage and after.

20. Is the targeted wage increase for program participants based on their level of income at the point of enrollment? In other words, for the purposes of this grant, if a person is unemployed at the point of enrollment are we basing their income on unemployment payments or what they were making the last time they were employed?

A. For unemployed participants, programs will collect information on the most recent wage.

21. Will programs be considered that both serve residents of the target geographic area and relocate individuals from other regions to meet critical healthcare shortages in the geographic area?

A. Sub-grantees are only expected to serve residents of their geographic area. Relocation of individuals is not encouraged, particularly given the random assignment evaluation requirements of the initiative.

RFP SUBMISSION PROCESS

22. On page 3 of the RFP, it states that hard copies of the proposal “must be submitted by U.S. Postal Service or express mail service.” Does “express mail service” include carriers such as FedEx, DHL, UPS, or other similar services?

A. Yes.

23. We have a question on the length of the proposal. We understand that it is to be double-sided printing, Is the maximum length then 17 sheets of paper double-sided or is it 35 sheets double-sided?

A. As stated on page 20 of the RFP, "The Program Proposal Narrative (excluding exhibits, attachments, forms, resumes, and budget spreadsheets and narrative) **should not exceed 35 single-spaced numbered pages in length." This means the maximum is 35 numbered pages, or 17 sheets of paper.**