

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION (“WDC”)**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP TITLE: Vocational ESL for Food Service Workers

PIN: 2024WDC016

Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) RFP Questions and Responses

1. How many awards citywide are you anticipating making?

Response: There will be 1 vendor selected.

2. When will you let us know if the budget will be line-item reimbursement or milestone-based payments?

Response: It is a line-item reimbursement payment.

3. Will there be a pre-proposal conference?

Response: There will no pre-proposal conference.

4. May we submit a proposal partnering together with another CBO, where the other entity provides some of the deliverables?

Response: Yes. The joint proposal should encompass all the requirements for the RFP. The applicant(s) needs to identify the primary applicant and the roles of the other organizations on the contract.

5. Quantitative Goals - Benchmarks: The RFP performance mandates: a minimum of eighty percent (80%) of enrolled Participants successfully complete training and that at least seventy percent (70%) of Participants that complete training obtain a wage gain and/or promotion within 90 calendar days of completing the Program. It appears that the vendor would be solely responsible for achieving these goals. Based on my experience, while we can certainly design a program that is set up for success, each restaurant’s support, resources, and engagement will be vital to achieving these benchmarks. For example, if a worker has the choice of getting paid to work or going to English class and not being paid, how do we, as the vendor, compel attendance? Also, when it comes to raises and promotions, it will be up to the restaurants to follow through. We have already come up with a plan to work with each restaurant to establish a raise/promotion schedule that lines up with the individual students as their English skills level up. However, what leverage would we, as the language education vendor, have to ensure that the restaurants follow through?

Response: For the first cohort in the pilot launch, SBS’s Food and Beverage Industry Partnership team will work to identify restaurants that will agree to incentivize their workers to complete the program. The class schedule and structure of the classes must work around most participant’s work hours and/or take place outside of participants’ scheduled work hours.

Metrocards and technology support should be provided by the Contractor. The proposer should consider attendance and participant engagement in the design of their curriculum and programmatic approach. The contract budget should be used to cover wrap-around supportive services and the proposal should include suggestions on additional services that should be offered. See answers to questions 17 and 18 for additional details around program goals.

6. Quantitative Goals – Number of Students: As for the minimum 150 students to be enrolled over the course of the “term”, we are not clear on what this means exactly. Does this mean that there will be 150+ students studying simultaneously for the full 3 years, or that over the course of 3 years 150+ student will do the program with, say 25+ students participating in a 6-month program at any given time? Any clarification on your expectations in this regard would be most appreciated.

Response: The proposer can determine the number and length of cohorts and the number of participants per cohort, as long as the 150-Participant target is met.

7. Anticipated Payment Structure: From our understanding of the RFP, the WDC can opt for a payment structure based on milestone-based payments tied to outcomes. Does this mean that there is a possibility that the vendor will not be paid for work rendered?

Response: It is a line-item reimbursement payment.

8. Hybrid Delivery: Based on our knowledge of the ESOL program at BCC, a large number of the students participating in the program do not have computers and can only participate in an online class on a smartphone. Do you have any sense whether there will be a similar challenge with the Participants who will be in the program?

Response: Proposers should include covering technology costs as part of their budget for this initiative.

9. How, if at all, would we as the Contractor be involved with ensuring that graduates from the program achieve wage gains or promotions? Will we be carrying out job placement for folks’ post-program? Or is it up to their current employers to make those decisions with regard to their growth in English skills?

Response: SBS’s Food and Beverage Industry Partnership team will identify qualified restaurant partners, which will be shared with the Contractor. Contractor is not responsible for ensuring graduates from the program achieve wage gains or promotions, but the Contractor will be responsible to check in with employers/participants at 90 days to report if there have been wage gains or promotions.

10. Can folks who are unemployed participate in this course, if they have worked in the food industry previously?

Response: No. This program is for incumbent restaurant workers.

11. How, if at all, would we as the Contractor be involved in recruitment for this program? The restaurants will prov The RFP mentions that WDC will help identify employer partners and

program participants. Can you clarify how we as the Contractor will collaborate with WDC in this process before the program begins?

Response: SBS's Food and Beverage Industry Partnership team will identify qualified restaurant partners and their targeted incumbent workers, which will be shared with the selected Contractor and the Contractor may provide input. For subsequent cohorts, SBS's Food and Beverage Industry Partnership team will work with the Contractor to identify qualified restaurant partners.

12. We were thinking about applying in partnership with another organization- would that be acceptable? The vision is a hybrid of programming between our two organizations, then we would assist with job placement.

Response: See Response to Question 4. The joint proposal should encompass all the requirements for the RFP. The applicant(s) needs to identify the primary applicant and the roles of the other organizations on the contract. Job placement is not a requirement of the RFP as program participants are currently employed by a restaurant partner.

13. The RFP states...

The target population for this program are incumbent workers in the food service industry with Limited English proficiency ("LEP"). What is the legal status of this population? Are they documented?

Response: This program serves existing food service workers and as such, employers are responsible for verifying their employment status. The contractor will not be required to verify status.

14. The RFP states...

It is anticipated that the total available funding awarded from this RFP will be up to \$763,000 for a three-year period. Does that mean that the total funding available per contract year will be up to \$254,333?

Response: The total contract is expected to be up to \$763,00, line-item reimbursement over the 3-year term of the contract. The spread of funding over the three-year period will depend on the Proposer's proposed cost and timing of activities in their proposal.

15. The RFP states...

Enroll a minimum of one hundred and fifty (150) LEP incumbent restaurant workers ("Participants") during the Term. Is the contractor expected to enroll 150 participants during the 3-year contract term or is that an annual number?

Response: The proposer can determine the number and length of cohorts and the number of participants per cohort, as long as the 150-Participant target is met.

16. The RFP states...

Ensure that a minimum of eighty percent (80%) of enrolled Participants successfully complete training. How is completion of training defined?

Response: Completion is defined as participants completing at minimum 80% of the curriculum and achieving progressive gains in English language skills. The Contractor is tasked with creating or identifying assessments to measure skills gain to be approved by WDC in consultation with restaurant partners.

17. The RFP states...

Confirm that at least seventy percent (70%) of Participants that complete training obtains a wage gain and/or promotion within 90 calendar days of completing the Program.

What is the required proof of an increase in salary/promotion?

Response: The Contractor will be responsible to check in with employers/participants at the 90-day mark to discover if there have been wage gains or promotions.

18. The RFP states...

The budget should also include provision of supportive services to Participants, including but not limited to laptops/equipment needed to participate in the program, web/app-based language instruction subscriptions to reinforce learning, transportation support, and other wrap-around supports the Contractor recommends.

Are we permitted to give the participants the equipment with no expectation for them to be returned rather than lending them?

If the intention is that we lend the equipment, what are the tracking requirements?

Response: Any technology needed for participant's use must be returned upon completion of the training cohort. The WDC will work with the Contractor in creating an equipment tracking system.

19. The RFP states...

Proposed training delivery and wrap-around supports. Describe the following and include rationale: i. Training schedule, including frequency (e.g. number of days per week, weekday/weekend breakdown, and total number of training sessions), training delivery setting (physical location, virtual environment or a combination of both), and the time of day when training is to be provided, the number of hours of instruction per training, and duration of any workplace component; In order to plan the training schedule, it would be helpful to have some additional information...

1. Are the employer allowing for the classes to take place during working hours?

Response: It is expected that classes will be held outside of work hours. However, this may differ based on the employer partner needs, as different restaurants have different kitchen hours of operation.

2. Are the employers paying their employees for their time spent in these classes? Aligned:

Response: Employers are not required to compensate their employees for their time spent in these classes. WDC will work with employer partners to explore incentives that may be provided to their employees for participating (which may include compensation for hours spent in VESL program).

3. If the expectation is for the classes to take place outside of their working hours, is there a time of day that would work best for the majority of workers in this industry?

Response: The Proposer should design training to best meet the needs of the target participants and drive program completion e.g., daytime or evening cohorts.

4. Do you know if the target audience is for deaf individuals or the general population? Our Sign Language Center focuses on deaf students to learn American Sign Language / written English.

Response: All qualified persons are eligible for applying to the VESL program. However, the target audience for the program is incumbent workers in the food restaurant industry who have limited English proficiency.