



Seattle Jobs Initiative

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

for Good Paying Careers Curriculum Delivery to 03/30/2010

Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) is seeking 3-5 contractors to deliver its Good Paying Careers curriculum to low income adults to further their understanding of, and enrollment in, industry sector related training, as outlined in the report, *Skills Required: Preparing Puget Sound for Tomorrow's Middle-Wage Jobs*.¹

This project is funded through March 30th, 2010, with contracts estimated to start September 1, 2009.

Overview of Good Paying Careers Project

The Good Paying Careers curriculum is a new outreach and education strategy for SJI which was developed to better disseminate pertinent Puget Sound industry and career projections to potential students and future workers. SJI produces regular reports on the local labor market and wanted to find a way to make the data more useful to current and future workers. This curriculum builds upon the 2008 recommendations of the Community College and Community-Based Organization Peer Learning Group published in the report, *Building Community Pipelines to Community College Certificate and Degree Attainment*², (PLG Report). The group's program recommendations related to this project were:

- Simplify the college enrollment and navigation process across King County college campuses, (PLG Report, p. 12, #1.)
- Support education navigators in the community, (PLG Report, p. 12, #4.)
- Support colleges' and CBOs' efforts to share responsibility for preparing prospective students to be successful, (PLG Report, p. 12, #5.)

The focus of Good Paying Careers Project is to provide 1.5 hours of instruction in regional labor market data regarding middle wage careers. It combines an animated slide presentation with interactive exercises to make the statistical information real and applicable for adults (and youth over 16 years old who are qualified and plan to enter college) who may or may not possess an understanding of the economy and how local labor market fluctuations and projections affect what job and career opportunities may be available.

To date, two phases of the project have been completed. SJI developed and beta tested the curriculum with community based organizations, community colleges, and other agencies in 2008. In total, 32 professionals in workforce and education reviewed the presentation and critiqued the curriculum. Feedback was vetted by the development team and integrated into a revised curriculum.

¹ "Skills Required: Preparing Puget Sound for Tomorrow's Middle-Wage Jobs", Paul Summers, PhD, Mark Gardner, & Juliet Scarpa, Seattle Jobs Initiative, 2008. (For report, go to: www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/policy/publications/documents/SJIMWJReport07242008.pdf for report.)

² "Building Community Pipelines to Community College Certificate and Degree Attainment", Seattle Jobs Initiative & City of Seattle Office for Economic Development, Feb. 2009. (For report, go to: www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/policy/publications/documents/seattlejobsinitiative.com/policy/publications/documents/FinalPeerLearningReport-2009.pdf.)

In 2009, SJI has presented the curriculum to 15 groups (to date), from CBO staff and/or participants to high school and community college staff and students.

SJI anticipates that the clients served through Good Paying Careers Project will have the following characteristics:

- Currently unemployed or underemployed
- Below 200% of FPL
- Interested in entering training to obtain a 1-year certificate, or 2-year degree.

Required Work and Qualifications

SJI serves low income adult populations. SJI program participants are typically nonworking adults or adults working below living wage with multiple barriers to employment. The Good Paying Careers Project is part of SJI’s efforts to support SkillUp Washington’s, (formerly known as the King County Workforce Education Collaborative,) On Ramps & Bridges strategy to better prepare low-income adults to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training. Therefore, the contractors selected by SJI to work with the Good Paying Careers Project will need to be open to adapting their training model based on the number and type of clients who enroll in post secondary education and training.

SJI is seeking providers with established records of providing education and career guidance services to low-income adults. SJI would like to engage contractors who have served, at minimum, 50 clients per year in entering postsecondary education and training. SJI is interested in learning from each contractor where its clients attended training, in what types of programs, as well as the numbers of clients starting and completing training.

A total of \$2,000.00 per agency is earmarked for this project by SJI. Each selected contractor should plan to expand its services and modify its program delivery model to include more guidance to clients on career and education choices. This includes follow up and tracking of referrals made to community colleges and/or community-based navigators who may be working with the contracted agency to assist clients with the postsecondary education and training enrollment process.

Staff Team Serving Good Paying Careers Project Clients

One to two persons from each contracted agency will be required to attend the “train the trainer” session(s) to get trained on the curriculum and subsequently to deliver the training to clients of their agency. While SJI’s preference is for a team approach (two staff), if an agency’s staffing precludes this option, it will not prevent that agency from being awarded a contract. Evidence of agency ability to deliver curriculum and to enroll clients in postsecondary education and training will be the primary criteria by which qualifications will be judged.

The project outcomes for the contractor(s) are as follows:

Yearly	by Mar 30, 2010	Estimated Time Required
1	Staff team to attend orientation mtg. w/ SJI project manager	1 hour
1	Staff team to participate in Train the Trainer on Sept 16-17 (2 days @ 6-7 hrs/day)	13 hours
4	Minimum of 2 presentations per quarter (Fall ‘09, Winter ‘10) or at least 20 participants per quarter. Documentation required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign in sheet • Survey completed by each participant 	10 -20 hours
TBD	Referrals to training/advising & enrollment in training (industry sectors must align with GPC industries)	TBD

7	1 Meeting per month with the project team (Oct, Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr)	7 hours
Total Estimated Time Required:		At least 31 - 41 hours, with additional time commitment to be determined.

In order to apply, please answer the following questions (not to exceed 3 pages).

Questions

1. What expertise do you have in working with low income adult populations, specifically in providing education and career services to low income adults?
2. Describe the experience/abilities of your agency staff in conducting training for clients, particularly in a facilitative and interactive manner?
3. Please describe your agency's technical capacity in using MS PowerPoint, laptops, laptop projectors, and classroom electronic media equipment. (Agencies are expected to have access to such equipment for curriculum delivery; equipment will not be provided by SJI.)
4. Please specify the number of clients per year that your agency has assisted in entering postsecondary education and training. Please list the training courses and training providers, types of programs, and the number of clients who started and completed each training.
5. Describe any extra support or services you can leverage as part of this effort.
6. Please provide an estimate of how many clients you expect to reach with the Good Paying Careers curriculum, how you intend to integrate it into your current employment and training process, and how this training might help your agency better assist low-income adults pursue postsecondary education and training opportunities.

Process/Timeline

Procurement Schedule Key Dates

- RFQ released - Fri, 7/17/09
- Q & A posting - through Fri, 07/24/09
- RFQ Response due - Fri, 07/31/09
- RFQ Reviews - Mon, 08/03/09 – Fri, 08/14/09
- Selection Notification - Tues, 08/18/09
- Contracts Finalized - Wed, 08/19/09 – Thurs, 08/27/09
- Contracts Begin - Tues, 09/1/09

Due Date

All responses must be received at SJI no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 31, 2009. Late responses will not be accepted.

Questions Regarding the RFQ

Questions about this RFQ should be addressed to Linda Rider. Questions may be emailed to lrider@seattlejobsinit.com. All emailed questions and answers will be compiled and emailed twice a week to all bidders. SJI will schedule interviews/meeting if necessary after the responses have been reviewed internally.

Technical Assistance

SJI is interested in assisting bidders to prepare competitive responses. As appropriate, additional technical assistance may be made available at bidders' request. Any additional technical assistance to be provided will be posted via email to all bidders.

Contract Finalization and Negotiations

SJI plans to finalize all contract agreements between August 19th and August 27th. Please make those days available for meeting, if necessary.

Evaluation Criteria

All contract decisions will be based on the information provided in the response to the questions posed in this RFQ.

Response Submission

Format

All responses must be typed in 12-point font on white paper with one-inch margins. SJI strongly encourages bidders to present information clearly and succinctly and avoid lengthy narrative.

Number of Copies

Five hard copies plus the original, including all exhibits and attachments, if any, must be submitted to SJI by the due date. Additionally an *electronic copy* should also be emailed to Linda Rider, lrider@seattlejobsinit.com by the due date. Faxed or emailed responses alone or late responses will not be accepted.

Mailing/Delivery Location

Responses must be received at the SJI office at 330 Sixth Avenue North, Suite 301, Seattle, Washington 98109 not later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 31, 2009. Late proposals will not be accepted.

RFQ Grievance Policies and Procedures

The following grievance procedure shall apply to all contracts awarded by Seattle Jobs Initiative ("SJI"). Therefore, SJI will, at its sole option, entertain appeals to the RFQ process as follows:

1. Unsuccessful applicants may appeal the award of an RFQ. Appeals must be submitted in accordance to this procedure. SJI will review the appeals; however, the appeal might not affect the outcome decision.
2. Appeals must contain a brief statement of the facts and the basis for the grievance in clear terms. The basis of the grievance must be a violation of a state or federal contracting law, rule or regulation, which is applicable to the contracting process; AND/OR be a violation of the stated review process published within the original RFQ.
3. SJI retains the right to reject any and all proposals and is not required to award any contract if in its opinion the proposal received failed to meet its requirements, if the proposal is non-responsive or if the bidder is not responsible.
4. All appeals must be in writing, must comply with the requirements set forth in this appeal procedure and must be received or postmarked by SJI within five (5) business days of receipt of notification of the successful respondent.
5. Appeals must be sent either by first class U.S. mail or via delivery service, to SJI Executive Director, Seattle Jobs Initiative, 330 6th Avenue North, Suite 301, Seattle, WA 98109. If the appeal is sent via first class U.S. mail, Appellants must also send a copy of the appeal via facsimile to (206) 628-6986.

6. Appellants will be allowed to review the proposals submitted on site at SJI offices. All propriety information will be deleted such as financial statements and audits, and no photocopies of the proposals will be allowed.
7. All protests are public information after the protest period ends.
8. The SJI Executive Director will review grievances that meet the above conditions. The executive director will provide a written determination within 5 business days of receipt of the appeal or receipt of additional information that may be required by SJI, whichever is later.
9. During any part of the review or consideration, the protester may be asked to clarify or amplify statements or to provide proof of claims or other statements. Any such requests must be fully responded to within the time designated by the Executive Director. In the event a protester fails to respond, the grievance will be dismissed and no further protest will be accepted.
10. The Executive Director's written response is final, unless appealed as provided below to the SJI Board of Directors within the time frame set forth below.
11. The decision of the executive director may be appealed to the SJI Board of Directors. Any such second level appeal must be submitted in writing to the president of the SJI Board of Directors and received or postmarked within five (5) working days of the protester's receipt of the decision of the Executive Director. Failure to comply with this time period is a complete waiver of the appellant's ability to appeal, and the Executive Director's decision shall become final and binding on the parties. This appeal must contain the same information and follow the same procedure as the original appeal and, in addition, must clearly state how the decision of the executive director is in error or based on a misunderstanding of fact.
12. Prior to the release of the RFQ, the SJI Board President will appoint three members to serve on a review committee. The review committee will review all applicable materials.
13. The SJI Board Review Committee may request additional information from the appellant.
14. The final written decision of the SJI Board Review Committee will be conveyed to the protestor within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the second level appeal or receipt of any additional information requested by the SJI Board Review Committee whichever is later.
15. Unless the appellant has a right to appeal or protest pursuant to state or federal law, the written decision by the SJI Board Review Committee is the final and binding resolution to the protest. If the appellant has a right to appeal or protest pursuant to state or federal law, the appellant must follow the laws, rules and regulations applicable to such protests.
16. If an appeal is filed, no new contracts resulting from the solicitation will be finalized until the appeal process is completed or the appeal resolved (although SJI may continue to negotiate contracts with the apparently successful bidder). An appeal will not prevent SJI from issuing an interim contract for services to meet critical client needs.
17. Except for those contracts where SJI is required to award contracts through competitive procurement, SJI retains the right to award contracts to those entities whom, in SJI's sole discretion, submit the most beneficial proposal. SJI may reject any and all bids and is not required to award bids to the lowest bidder. For those contracts required to be awarded through a competitive procurement process, SJI reserves the right to reject any and all bids for non-responsiveness or to re-bid the procurement. SJI also reserves its right to reject any bids in accordance with the competitive procurement process. For all contracts, SJI recognizes that unsuccessful bidders may want to discuss the award of the RFQ and provide further information for SJI's consideration.