



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY
Fiscal Year 2023**

BRIDGES TO EMPLOYING YOUTH (BRIDGES)

Announcement Date: January 4, 2023

Technical Assistance Workshop: January 19, 2023

Application Due Date: February 8, 2023

**Robert Asaro-Angelo
Commissioner**

**Bridges to Employing Youth
Notice of Grant Opportunity – FY 2023**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section A:	Name of Grant Program	Page 2
Section B:	Purpose for Which the Grant Fund Will Be Used	Page 2
Section C:	Available Funding	Page 2
Section D:	Eligible Applicants	Page 3
Section E:	Targeted Population	Page 3
Section F:	Program Services	Page 4
Section G:	Program Outcomes and Reporting	Page 5
Section H:	Procedures for Eligible Entities to Apply	Page 6
Section I:	Technical Assistance and Application Submission	Page 8
Section J:	Award Process	Page 8

Attachments:

[Applicant Title Page](#)
[Standard Assurances and Certifications and General Provisions](#)
[Program Requirements](#)
[Partner Agreement Form](#)
[Budget Detail Forms](#)

Take notice, in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4 et seq., the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (hereinafter “the NJDOL”) regularly publishes all notices of available funding for federal and state grants, awarded by the Department, on its website at <http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor>.

A. NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM

Bridges to Employing Youth (Bridges)

B. PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE FUNDS WILL BE USED

The NJDOL Office of Youth Programs recognizes that unique challenges and increased barriers experienced by certain special youth populations require proportionate responses of specialized services and supports to resolve. This Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) seeks to expand the capacity of NJDOL’s workforce system, through an influx of specialized providers, to adequately address the career development needs of the following special populations:

1. Youth with disabilities;
2. Justice-involved youth;
3. Youth who are or have aged out of Foster Care; and
4. Pregnant or parenting youth.

Youth who belong to each of these special populations experience higher rates of unemployment and poverty, lower educational opportunities and attainments, a deficit of work experience opportunities, and hardships of a unique nature and higher degree than the broader youth population.

The NJDOL Office of Youth Programs will administer the Bridges program to provide specialized workforce development services to these populations in an effort to enhance the current practices and systems intended to serve their needs. NJDOL expects that this program will focus on partnerships and collaboration between state and local agencies and systems to create a coordinated process in ensuring the healthy career development of these populations.

Programs are required to serve one of the four targeted populations outlined above per application submission. An applicant who wants to serve multiple targeted populations must submit a separate application for each population.

C. AVAILABLE FUNDING

The Bridges program is expected to be funded by WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Set-Aside funds. This NGO serves as the first year of a three-year grant cycle. The amount of year one funding expected to be available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024) is \$3,600,000. All funds must be fully expended by March 31, 2024. For each successive year of the grant cycle, the approved applicant will be required to apply for continuation funding.

Final awards are contingent upon State allocation of funds. The applicant’s budget must be well considered, necessary for the implementation of the program, and within the funding parameters. Final amounts will be determined at the time of pre-contract revisions. Ineligible, inappropriate or undocumented costs will be removed from the funding request.

D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This targeted, competitive opportunity is open to organizations who fall under the following categories:

1. Municipal and county governments;
2. Public training providers or trade schools;
3. Community-based organizations;
4. Labor organizations;
5. Employers and/or contractors;
6. Public vocational schools;
7. Institutions of higher education;
8. Public or private non-profit agencies; or
9. Trade organizations which represent a particular trade, group of trades.

All applications must establish a lead agency. The lead agency serves as the applicant agency of record, the legally recognized fiscal agent for the grant project, and the single point of contact for NJDOL. The lead agency will be expected to coordinate all aspects of the grant, i.e., outreach and recruitment; program services; project and spending plan; grant project monitoring and reporting; and fiscal management.

Applicants must demonstrate their experience serving the identified target population and their capacity to provide youth workforce development services as outlined in section F and explained further in the FY23 Bridges Program Requirements attachment.

E. TARGETED POPULATIONS

Applications must target eligible youth, defined as out-of-school* youth (with or without a high school diploma), ages 16-24 in one of the following four targeted populations:

1. Youth with disabilities;
 - a. Defined as a youth who indicates that s/he has any "disability", as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. Justice-involved youth;
 - a. Defined as a youth who either (i) has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for committing a status offense or delinquent/criminal act, or (ii) requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction for committing delinquent acts, such as crimes against persons, crimes against property, status offenses, or other crimes.
3. Youth who are/have aged out of Foster Care; and
4. Pregnant or parenting youth.
 - a. Defined as youth who are expecting and/or parenting moms and dads.

*For the purposes of this NGO, out-of-school youth is defined as any youth not attending nor committed to return to any school.

F. PROGRAM SERVICES

Applicants must implement a comprehensive plan of activities, services, and strategies to address the needs of their targeted population, particularly as it relates to addressing the gaps in practices and systems identified in the applicant’s statement of need.

The program services expected to be made available to participants in each targeted population are outlined on page three (3), and further clarified in the FY23 Bridges Program Requirements. Programs, where appropriate, must be designed to connect eligible youth with services according to their Individual Service Strategy (ISS), in order to support informed and individualized connections to education, training, WIOA programs, DVRS supported employment, military, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship, and unsubsidized employment.

NOTE: The services shaded below in blue are required to be provided to ALL participants.

Program Services	Youth with Disabilities	Justice-Involved Youth	Youth Aging Out of Foster Care	Pregnant or Parenting Youth
Individual Service Strategy (ISS)	X	X	X	X
Risk and Needs Assessment		X		
Intake / Registration with local county One-Stop Career Center’s AOSOS System	X	X	X	X
WIOA Youth Eligibility Determination with One-Stop Career Center	X	X	X	X
Registration with local county Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	X			
Case management	X	X	X	X
Supportive services	X	X	X	X
Benefits counseling	X	X	X	X
Legal services		X	X	X
Basic skills academic instruction and/or high school equivalency completion supports	X	X	X	X
Standardized Academic Pre-test & Post-test (CASAS GOALS)	X	X	X	X
Career guidance, planning, and counseling	X	X	X	X
Employability & workplace readiness training	X	X	X	X
Financial literacy education	X	X	X	X

Mentoring	X	X	X	X
Work experience Opportunities (Paid or Unpaid)	X	X	X	X
Placement support	X	X	X	X
Follow-up/ retention support (90-day period)	X	X	X	X

Recommended Partnerships per Population:

Youth with Disabilities

Successful proposals should partner with their local School District(s) in order to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth, and with their local county Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) in order to make appropriate referrals for DVRS services as needed.

Justice-Involved Youth

Successful proposals should partner with legal services organizations and the Juvenile Justice Commission to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth. Proposals should also demonstrate a partnership with legal services organizations to connect this target population with legal services and other program elements utilized to eliminate structural barriers to employment (including, but not limited to, access to and understanding their record, assistance with sealing or expunging their record, accessing Federal Bonding, and supporting youth and employer education about state background terminology as well as employment laws).

Youth who are Aging or have Aged Out of Foster Care

Successful proposals should partner with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and/or DHS-funded programs to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth.

Youth who are Pregnant and/or Parenting

Successful proposals should partner with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and Families to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible both male and female youth.

G. PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND REPORTING

Successful providers must be prepared to have systems in place to track, document and report all outcomes. Performance measures for successful providers will include:

- Enroll the contracted number of participants to serve;
- For participants without a high school diploma* at time of enrollment:
 - 70 percent must obtain a measurable skill.
 - A measurable skill gain is defined as a.) Growth of one grade level in either subject of reading or math, based on CASAS GOALS pre- and post-test; or b.) Successful passing of a high school equivalency exam, resulting in a high school diploma.

*In the case of Youth with Disabilities, if a High School diploma is deemed unattainable by way of standardized academic testing, that youth is not expected to receive pre- and post-testing nor be expected to attain a High School diploma.

- At least 70 percent of ALL participants will achieve a placement into one or more of the following:
 - Education Program;
 - Occupational Training Program;
 - WIOA (Youth or Adult) Program;
 - Military;
 - Pre-Apprenticeship or Apprenticeship Program;
 - DVRS Supported Employment (only for youth with disabilities);
 - Meaningful Unsubsidized Employment, defined as:
 - Full-time (at least 25 hrs/wk); and
 - Earning at least minimum wage.

Grantees will be required to collect and report specific data regarding demographics and services provided to each participant. The process for reporting the completed data will be provided to the grantee upon awarding of funds.

Grantees must submit a monthly fiscal report to YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov by the 15th of each month. Grantees will be paid on a monthly reimbursement method, after the financial report has been submitted to and approved by NJDOL.

H. PROCEDURES FOR ELIGIBLE ENTITIES TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDS

Applications must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability and plan to provide the requested services. All attachments mentioned within this document are provided as live links on page one (1). Each applicant must submit an application packet which must be organized as follows:

1. Applicant Title Page

Complete all summary information. The Chief Executive Officer or authorized signatory must sign and date the title page.

2. Statement of Need

Applicants must identify gaps in the current practices and systems serving the targeted population to be served by their program. Demonstrate the need for the program, in relation to the NGO, and provide documentation and data that substantiates the identified gaps and needs.

3. Organizational Commitment and Capacity

Applicants should describe the extent of their organizational commitment to the program. The applicant should include their experience(s) working with the targeted population chosen to be served and implementing services similar to the program services described within this NGO.

4. Program Narrative

Applicants must outline a comprehensive plan of recruitment, activities, services, and strategies to implement each component of the Program Services listed in section F and to successfully meet or exceed the performance measures listed in section G. Successful applications will clearly address each service component in separate sections.

Applicants should additionally address the following questions when crafting their program narrative:

- a. Include a list of recruitment sources/partners to ensure diverse entry points to the program.
- b. What is the timeline of your plan from recruitment through placement?

5. Planned Partnerships

Applicants who plan to partner with other entities to provide any of the services listed in section F must submit partnership agreements as part of their application. The roles of each partnership must also be addressed in the program narrative.

6. Budget Details and Narrative

Applicants must submit the linked budget detail forms and a budget narrative reflecting how program funds will be expended. All amounts reported on the budget detail must be fully supported by information provided in the budget narrative. Applicants must provide a demonstrated costs basis and provide justification for all aspects of the budget.

Note: Only 10% of grant funds may be used for administrative/indirect service purposes. Administrative personnel are staff not directly working with participants. Non-personnel administrative costs are expenses that do not directly benefit participants. (i.e. copy machines, payroll services, etc.)

Evaluation Criteria: All applications will be evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to the NGO, and will use the standard evaluation criteria listed below:

Criteria	Total Points (100)
Statement of Need: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gaps in the current practices and systems serving the targeted population to be served are clearly identified.• Documentation and data substantiates the identified gaps.	10
Organizational Commitment and Capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The applicant's commitment to the project is well-documented and possesses the organizational capacity, including necessary resources and relevant experiences working with their selected target population, to support successful implementation of this program.	20

<p>Program Narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program narrative is comprehensive and reasonable, addresses the identified needs and will contribute to the achievement of the intended benefits of the grant program. • The processes for recruitment, intake, and eligibility determination are clear and well planned. • Recruitment plan includes various referral sources/entry points into the program. • The program services are clearly addressed in separate sections and are in accordance with section F of this NGO. • The timeline for program implementation is clearly laid out and the sequencing is easy to follow. 	50
<p>Planned Partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes agreements with partners relevant to program implementation. • Partnerships have clearly defined roles. 	10
<p>Budget Details and Budget Narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project budget adheres to the described program services and the proposed expenditures are reasonably necessary for their effective implementation. 	10

**If any of the required documents are not submitted, signed and dated, your application will be considered incomplete and, therefore, may not be reviewed by the selection committee.*

I. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND APPLICATION SUBMISSION

NJDOL will provide a remote technical assistance workshop. Attendance is mandatory for applicants to be considered eligible to apply. The workshop will be held on January 19, 2023 at 10:00am via Microsoft TEAMS.

Applicants planning to attend the workshop must RSVP via email to YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov and include name of organization, names of attendees, and email address for each attendee. The deadline to RSVP for the workshop is by 4:00pm on January 17, 2023.

Only those who have properly submitted an RSVP will receive an email confirmation and Microsoft TEAMS meeting link to attend.

The completed, signed application must be submitted electronically no later than 12:00pm on February 8, 2023. Please submit the application via email with the subject line marked “(Name of Organization) – Application for FY23 Bridges to Employing Youth” to YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov. Application documents can be submitted as Word or PDF files, but all budget information must be submitted as Excel files.

J. AWARD PROCESS

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must have satisfactorily completed the required elements of this NGO. All applications are subject to review, pre-contract revisions, and

approval by the NJDOL Commissioner. Final amounts will be determined at the time of pre-contract revisions and are subject to the availability of funds.

NJDOL reserves the right to reject any and all applications when circumstances indicate that it is in its best interest to do so. NJDOL's best interests in this context include, but are not limited to, loss of funding; inability of the applicant to provide adequate services and indication of misrepresentation of information.