



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

**NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY
Fiscal Year 2020**

BRIDGES TO EMPLOYING YOUTH (BRIDGES)

Announcement Date: October 24, 2019

Technical Assistance Workshop: November 8, 2019 & November 15, 2019

Application Due Date: December 2, 2019

**Robert Asaro-Angelo
Commissioner**

**Bridges to Employing Youth
Notice of Grant Opportunity – FY 2020**

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Take notice, in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4 et seq., the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (hereinafter “the LWD”) 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 LWD 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 LWD’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 LWD 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. LWD 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

Bridges funding will be made available through WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Set-Aside funds. The total amount of funding available for this program in Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 2020) is \$3,600,000. It is anticipated that a total of \$900,000 will be awarded to serve each of the four (4) targeted special youth populations for the purpose of implementing this initiative. Individual proposals may not exceed \$450,000.

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.

The grant period for this initiative will be for a 16-month duration and is estimated to begin on March 1, 2020. All funds must be fully expended by June 30, 2021. Unless otherwise negotiated, selected providers must be ready to begin infrastructure-building March 1, 2020, with full operations of the programs expected to begin no later than May 1, 2020. For the purpose of this NGO, infrastructure-building relates to the setup of all operations of the program leading to full implementation of service-delivery.

Bridges programs may be considered for a continuance of up to an additional year, contingent upon successful performance of the program/grantees and upon the availability of funds.

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 LWD. 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.

Special consideration for funding will be given to applicants who are currently not connected to the State's workforce system, but exhibit the experience, commitment, and capacity addressing the unique needs of their application's identified target population.

*Applicants planning to serve youth with disabilities must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

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. A "disability" is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities.
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 the 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 five (5), and further clarified in the [Program Services Guidelines](#). 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, supported employment, military, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship, and unsubsidized employment.

NOTE: The services shaded below 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
Supported employment	X			
Placement support	X	X	X	X
Follow-up/ retention support (90-day period)	X	X	X	X

Mandated Partnerships per Population:

Youth with Disabilities

Successful proposals will, at a minimum, partner with their local School District(s) in order 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 will, at a minimum, partner with legal services organizations and the Juvenile Justice Commission to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth. Proposals will 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 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 will, at a minimum, partner with the Department of Human Services to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth.

Youth who are Pregnant and/or Parenting

Successful proposals will, at a minimum, 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 gain if their grade level equivalent (according to CASAS GOALS) is below 9th grade level in both Math and Reading.
 - A measurable skill gain is defined as a.) Growth of one grade level in either subject of reading or math, based on CASAS GOALS post-test; or b.) Successful passing of a high school equivalency exam, resulting in a high school diploma
 - 70 percent must obtain a high school diploma if their grade level equivalent is at or above 9th grade level in both Math and Reading.
- At least 70 percent of ALL participants will achieve a placement into one or more of the following:
 - Full-Time Education Program;
 - Occupational Training Program;
 - WIOA (Youth or Adult) Program;
 - Military;

- Pre-Apprenticeship or Apprenticeship Program;
- Supported Employment (only for youth with disabilities);
- Meaningful Unsubsidized Employment, defined as:
 - Full-time; 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 grantees will be required to provide the completed data at defined intervals to be entered and tracked in AOSOS. 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 LWD.

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. To ensure consistency and fairness in the evaluation process, 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. Standard Assurances and Certifications and General Provisions

LWD's linked Standard Assurances and Certifications and General Provisions must be signed and submitted as part of the application packet.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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. How do you plan to verify participants' eligibility (age, out-of-school, special population)?
- b. What is the timeline of your plan?

6. Planned Partnerships

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

7. 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.

Evaluation Criteria: All applications will be evaluated by a committee for selection 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)
<p>Statement of Need:</p> <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. 	25
<p>Organizational Commitment and Capacity:</p> <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. 	15
<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. • 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. 	40

Planned Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes agreements pertaining to the mandated partnerships per population identified in section F and any additional partnerships relevant to program implementation. • Partnerships have clearly defined roles. 	10
Budget Details and Budget Narrative: <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

LWD will provide two technical assistance workshops. Attendance at one workshop is mandatory for applicants to be considered eligible to apply. The workshops will be held on November 8, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. and November 15, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 13th floor auditorium, located at 1 John Fitch Plaza, Trenton, NJ 08625.

Applicants planning to attend one of the above workshops 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 either workshop is listed as follows:

- By 5:00pm on November 5, 2019 for the workshop held on November 8, 2019.
- By 5:00pm on November 12, 2019 for the workshop held on November 15, 2019.

Only those who have properly submitted an RSVP will receive an email confirmation to attend, which will include important information for parking and access to the building.

The completed, signed application must be submitted electronically no later than 5:00 P.M. on December 2, 2019. Please submit the application via email with the subject line marked “(Name of Organization) – Application for FY20 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 LWD Commissioner. Final amounts will be determined at the time of pre-contract revisions and are subject to the availability of funds.

LWD reserves the right to reject any and all applications when circumstances indicate that it is in its best interest to do so. LWD’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.