

8.C.1 Request for Proposal for PY-2007-08 Programs and Services – (Action)

NOTE:

Pursuant to federal and state regulations, SWWDB previously adopted a Conflict of Interest Policy #B-501 (See Attachment 1). The policy states, in part, that a Board member is prohibited from:

“Having a personal financial interest, a business interest, or any other obligation that in any way creates a substantial conflict with the proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or that creates a conflict with the best interest of SWWDB.”

Anyone who believes he/she has or may have a conflict of interest shall disclose such interest to the Executive Director.

In addition, the Department of Workforce Development, Program Guide, Part1 – Administration of Workforce Programs Policy and Procedure Manual, Section III – Fiscal Requirements, Subsection H – PROCUREMENT STANDARDS, Subparagraph 1.d – Competition reads as follows:

Procurements must be conducted in a manner that provides for full, open and nonrestrictive competition. The procedures must ensure that solicitations identify all requirements that the offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

- (1) Each grantee (In this case a Workforce Development Board (WDB) must ensure that all qualified lists of persons, firms or other organizations that are used in acquiring goods and services are current and include sufficient numbers of qualified sources to ensure maximum open and free competition.*
- (2) A grantee (In this case a WDB subcontractor) that develops specifications, the statement of work, an invitation for bids, a request for proposals, or evaluates or recommends such proposals may not be eligible to compete for the procurement. This applies to all types of agreements.*

In light of the SWWDB Conflict of Interest Policy and the DWD procurement standards, discussion and voting on the PY-2007-08 RFP could be viewed as a conflict of interest for Board members who represent organizations that may submit a proposal. For this reason, Board members are encouraged to determine if he/she has a potential conflict of interest and it is recommended that he/she recuse himself/herself from discussion on this topic.

At a joint meeting of the Program Operations and Workforce Services Committees, staff presented information on a new model for service delivery. This Career Pathways model establishes a distinct progression of services to clients that differs from the traditional service model within the Job Centers.

Job Center WIA services have traditionally been job seeker focused – with the emphasis on assisting job seekers obtain jobs. It is not until an individual has been determined eligible for WIA services that a skill/interest assessment is completed to help the person target a job or occupational area that fits his or her interests and aptitudes. The job seeker then makes a choice to either 1) find a job that coincides with his or her current abilities/skills, or 2) enroll in an educational program intended to provide the skills needed to obtain a job. The current educational programs open to job seekers are one- or two-year programs, offered on a semester basis through the local technical colleges. Once education has been completed, the job seeker again reenters job search. Job Center/WIA services to the job seeker are basically complete once a person obtains a job.

In contrast, the Career Pathways model provides “stepping stones” to help workers gain

skills needed for employment and advancement in a specific occupation. Greater emphasis is placed on “front-end” services – particularly assessment and career exploration activities to assist individuals identify their career goal. The learning opportunities in Career Pathways are connected or “chunked” education courses, offered in a modified format, that assist an unemployed or working adult upgrade their skills for the current job market by completing a credential, a short-term course, or an associate degree program. Career Pathways targets jobs within industries of importance to the local area and is intended to increase the supply of qualified workers for local employers in the targeted industries.

Career Pathways is not a new model. It has been used in other workforce areas, most notably the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, for several years. It should also be noted that the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Technical College System has been awarded a “Shifting Gears” Grant from the Joyce Foundation that will focus on developing competency-based curricula to accommodate the Career Pathway model with a special emphasis on moving low income workers into high paying jobs. Also, recent funding initiatives are using GROW regions to define service delivery systems. SWWDB's GROW partner, WDBSCW, is heavily invested in Career Pathways. Aligning service delivery systems between SWWDB and WDBSCW will benefit future funding opportunities.

Staff made a preliminary presentation of the Career Pathways Model to the Program Operations and Workforce Services committees with the goal of obtaining authorization to use the Career Pathways model for the Spring 2007 RFP process. While the committees voted to authorize staff to develop the RFP around Career Pathways, they reserved a final decision until the matter could be discussed at the full Board meeting in March.

Barb Tucker has been working to write a Request for Proposal for funding FY 2007-08 program activities using the Career Pathways concept. Implementation of this model will result in several changes in the sequence and delivery of services. A significant factor in the RFP development is to ensure consistency in service delivery across the entire area, while providing for the needs of both businesses and job seekers. The new RFP differs from past models in several ways. First, is a philosophical shift in the funding process. The traditional process has been to identify the WIA funding levels available and ask potential providers to identify a “package of services” that can be provided based on available funding. The suggested method for this RFP, is to identify the minimum WIA services to be provided with potential program operators explaining how services will be delivered and identifying the associated costs of delivering these services. The second suggested RFP change is the funding of specific services within the Career Pathway Model as opposed to funding categorical programs (i.e. Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Older Youth). The third change is for 2 separate RFP packages: one for service delivery in the Comprehensive Job Center and the second for service delivery to the Access Point of Service Job Centers. Ms. Tucker and Ms. Charles will briefly review the Career Pathways Model and respond to questions. Ms. Tucker will provide an overview of the proposed RFP document and answer questions about its content, the RFP process, and timeline.

Action by the Board to approve the RFP for publication is requested. Publication of the RFP will begin the transition toward a Career Pathway Model service delivery system within the southwest Wisconsin WDA.