

Answers to Technical Assistance Questions

FHREB RFP#2016-2 One Stop Career Center Operator/Provider

Answers to questions submitted by email by the required date, and to questions asked at the Bidders Conference 8/19/16.

26 August 2016

Q & A was preceded by brief introduction and walk-through of the proposal. Explained that this is a new process for the REB - the first time since 1998 that One Stop services have to be procured - and there may be some rough edges. Please continue to check the website for any corrections/amendations that may need to be made.

1. Who is the current One-Stop Operator and Provider?

The Franklin Hampshire Employment & Training Consortium (FHETC).

2. How long have the current Operator and/or Provider been in the role?

FHETC has been in the role of One Stop Operator/Service Provider since the One Stop concept was introduced in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

3. If we want to propose keeping current centers, can you provide related facility costs?

No, facility leases are negotiated by the current Operator/Provider, not the REB, and are proprietary information. A new vendor would need to negotiate their own.

4. Can you provide the list of current MOU One-Stop Partners and the RSA costs each currently pay by facility?

A list of MOU One Stop Partners can be found in the FY16 WIOA Plan on our website, pp.3-4

<http://franklinhampshirereb.org/images/pdf/FY2016FranklinHampshireWIOA%20Plan.pdf>

All of those active in FY17 were part of an “umbrella” MOU (developed for the sake of this WIOA transition year), which can be found at <http://franklinhamshirereb.org/images/pdf/RFPOSCCOperationsProvider/AttachmetAFY2017WIOAInterimMOUFranklinHampshire.pdf> - WIOA Interim MOU FY17.

Historically, Resource Sharing Agreements (RSAs) in our region have been almost entirely “in kind” arrangements. For example, an elder employment service agency might have a cubicle at the Career Center; in return, they might then provide some assistance with front desk/reception assistance.

It is the expectation of WIOA and the MA Exec. Office of Labor & Workforce Development that more specific, financial cost-sharing agreements will be developed by the REB (in coordination with the One Stop Operator) over the next year.

5. How many staff are currently located at each One-Stop by position and employer?

Approximately 35 staff in total are currently located at the 3 One Stop Career Center sites. After consideration, we have concluded that further detail is proprietary to the current vendor.

6. We understand the successful bidder will be responsible for carry-over participants and their related costs. For individuals in training, does that amount come off the total available for the new contract or is it accounted for separately?

If individuals are already in training as of 7/1/17, the training will likely have been paid for with FY17 funds. If they are in a training “queue,” dollars would likely need to come out of the vendor’s FY18 funds.

7. Does the performance table on page 43 of the RFP count in the 25 page narrative limit?

No.

8. In the attachments, it indicates that proposed statewide performance measures are "under discussion." Is there a timeline for finalizing those and/or indication of what is being contemplated?

No. The state is still discussing, with input from the field.

9. Can you provide the current staffing structure, what the model looks like now?

Approximately 35 staff in total are currently located at the 3 One Stop Career Center sites. After consideration, we have concluded that further detail is proprietary to the current vendor.

10. Will the REB be working on the RSA's (Resource Sharing Agreements)?

Yes, we will be working these out over the next year.

11. Can a bidder bid on only sections of the RFP, such as for Youth Services only?

This RFP is not structured in that way, no.

IMPORTANT Point of Further Clarification: The above point refers to WIOA Youth Framework Services, which are included in this RFP and cannot be bid on separately under the current structure. However, the REB does bid out a contract for WIOA Youth direct services every two years. Please call 413-773-1835 to be put on a list of entities who would like notice of that RFP, or check our website regularly.

12. What is the performance of the current One Stop vendor?

See p. 34 of the RFP.

13. Is it possible to get the chart on p.43 in WORD?

Yes, we will post it on the website at [Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Table - Microsoft Word format](#) under "Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Table."

14. Does the budget form count as narrative?

No.

15. Are facilities the Board's responsibility, or is it the obligation of the contractor to provide? Can the current cost be given?

Facility leases are negotiated by the current Operator/Provider, not the REB, and are considered proprietary information. A new vendor would need to negotiate their own. The integrated budget for the FH Workforce Area is on the website and contains some information about premise costs.

16. What does the \$870,000 amount include? Does it include what will be needed for the fiscal agent, or was that held back? Same question regarding the youth contract.

As stated on p.10, the \$870,000 being contracted out does not include the WIOA Youth direct service contract. Nor does it include an estimated \$180,000 in funds being held back that may be needed to cover core functions of the REB as well as financial management/oversight functions of the WIOA Administrative/Fiscal Entity.

17. On p.13 you state that unexpended funds in a given year may revert back to the REB. Current practice is to reserve a certain amount of funds to carry over to the next fiscal year. Will this not be allowed?

Acknowledged that WIOA does allow regions to carry 20% of funds over to the next fiscal year. That practice will still be allowable.

IMPORTANT Point of further clarification: However, it is the REB and WIOA Administrative/Fiscal Entity who decide how to handle carryover funds, with input from the vendor. Depending on the circumstances, that decision may or may not result in the vendor having continuing access to those funds for Operator/Provider services.

18. What amount does the region usually carry over?

Historically, the region has tended to carry over 20%.

19. On p.16 you state that the REB often seeks competitive funding, and "the successful proposer will be required to collaborate with these grants as needed." Can you clarify what you mean by collaborate? If there is work that is going to be required, there will be a cost to that...If you meant "cooperate," "negotiate," it doesn't say that.

Perhaps we should clarify the use of the word "required" instead. It would have been better-phrased as "expected." The REB seeks competitive funding that will forward the Board's mission/priorities and the region's needs. We expect the Career Center Operator/Provider and the REB to be collaborative partners in identifying those needs and shaping those priorities, rather than working as separate entities in different spheres, with little attention to each other's goals and constraints. The Board and its staff would be unlikely to oblige the Career Center to perform extra work without the resources/capacity needed to do so. We envision a coordinated and deliberative process of addressing area workforce development needs together.

20. On page 21, it says: The One Stop Operator provides management and coordination of the partnership of agencies that comprise the OSCC system. Do you mean that the operator provides management and coordinates staff of agencies that are co-located in the Career Center?

Yes.

21. On page 17, where it states the successful proposer shall be a sub-recipient, could you clarify the sub-recipient of which organization? Of the fiscal entity, of the Administrative Entity, or of the REB?

Of the WIOA Title I Administrative Entity and the REB. We are seeing the One Stop Operator/Provider as the sub-recipient of resources that come to the workforce region's Lead Elected Officials to deliver on behalf of the region through their WIOA Administrative/Fiscal Entity. The REB approves and oversees use of those resources.

22. Still confusing. FHETC is the current WIOA Title I Administrative & Fiscal Entity and is not being bid out, so we are trying to clarify our role as Administrative/Fiscal Entity going forward.

FHETC will continue to act as the WIOA Title I Administrative/Fiscal Entity for the Mayors, overseen by the Mayor-appointed members of the REB and its E.D. However, potentially the One Stop Operator/Provider services will be contracted out. In that case, FHETC would no longer be operating/providing WIOA services. However, they would still be responsible for sound financial management of the resources and thus have authority, along with the REB, to direct/limit the use of resources to ensure performance goals are met, and that operations and services remain in compliance with WIOA and related law.

23. On p. 22: It says "The Operator is responsible for coordinating with the REB to ensure system-wide standards are achieved, and utilize continuous quality improvement assessment tools to document positive change and to systemize standards and their usage across the system. Do you have any expectation of specific assessment tools or general methodology?"

We have general ideas, but we encourage the proposer to suggest some.

Point of further clarification: As part of its High Performing Board credentialing process, the FHREB did systematize a number of continuous quality improvement assessment tools, which are used regularly by Board members to review and evaluate Career Center performance. They can be found on the website at: [Evaluating and Re-Certifying the FHOSS Operator](#) - Evaluating and Re-certifying the FH – OSCC Operator.

24. On p. 23, regarding partner expectations: you say the Operator/Provider will hold meetings with Partners. We thought the REB took the lead on that. Please clarify.

We were thinking of Partner staff. Presumably the Operator/Provider would have occasion to pull together an Older Worker staff person, a DTA staff person, a Literacy staff person, for example, along with other staff to ensure better One Stop coordination.

25. On page 27, with regard to Eligibility Verification/Documentation. In talking with our management team, people felt like verification has been considered a WIOA Admin function as opposed to an Operator function. Want to clarify. Assuming that Operator will collect, then submit to administrator for review.

This proposal assumes the proposer will have a staff person to collect and verify eligibility. That is who is being required.

26. But then what is the responsibility as WIOA administrator? The WIOA Administrative Entity would be held accountable but not have a role in the review of it.

Need to confer with other planners on this.

IMPORTANT Point of further clarification: As noted in our introduction, this is a new process for the region and there are still questions to be resolved. We are trying to avoid inserting an additional layer of management/oversight into a workforce region that can ill-afford it. It seems apparent that the WIOA Title I Administrative/Fiscal Entity needs to have more than a Financial Management function: it will need to continue to have a role, along with the REB, in reviewing/ensuring WIOA compliance in general. How that impacts Administrative Entity staffing and structure is yet to be determined.

27. On p.29, it says One Stop Case Managers will be expected to provide "Support and intervention in time of crisis, assistance in the development and implementation of a crisis plan." The current operator does work with those in crisis and makes referrals. Is a new expectation being added?

No. The REB would expect that counselors/case managers would refer clients to services that go beyond what the One Stop staff can provide.

28. The following bullet states that case notes are done monthly in MOSES. Current provider does them continuously. Is this a change?

Keep in mind—in this and other areas--that in order to keep this process fair, the REB avoided conferring with the current provider on current practice. Doing case notes continuously is fine.

29. On p. 30: second paragraph of youth services: is the oversight of the youth contract an administrator or operator role?

Not clear on the distinction being made. Will have to confer with consultant and planners before answering.

Point of later clarification: We do not see WIOA Youth Framework services as purely an administrative function. As such, we have made them part of the Operator/Service Provider role. They could or could not be a combination of administrative, oversight, eligibility, and direct service activities. The Proposer is asked to describe their vision.

30. On p. 33: clarify what you mean by service providers.

We were referring to in-house WIOA staff, not outside providers.

31. On p. 34: last sentence. Will there be an input role in setting those goals and costs?

The Board sets policy and standards and has an expectation that the One Stop will be responsive to those. For example, the Board might set a priority on front desk/welcome services, even though that might be at the expense of some other service. The Board has expectations but is not rigid. There is room for discussion and modification where the Board and Operator have different views.

32. Not talking about policy, but about the creation of additional performance goals. The question is, will the vendor have input on any additional performance goals being developed by the REB, and an opportunity to point out costs that may be involved?

Yes.

33. Page 36. Records Retention not consistent with state and federal rules and Contract Terms & Conditions. States five (5) years, but under federal rules three (3) and seven (7) for state.

An error. The region should follow federal/state guidance and the Contract Terms & Conditions.

34. Page 48: Item k. Certificate of Insurance. Current certificate does not cover this because policy is that no staff person is allowed or required to transport customers. Does this need to change?

The language regarding the Certificate of Insurance was recommended language from the state office and may not apply equally to all regions and vendors. If you have a Certificate of Insurance with more or fewer clauses, please provide and explain why you think it is sufficient. Changes, if necessary, will be negotiated at a later time.

35. Page 37: Property Management Requirements. Under current Uniform Guidance approval is for over \$5,000.

The language was adopted from an outdated document. You will be following current Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200.

36. Page 40: #3 letter a) "Describe past and current activities, programs, or contracts, administered and operated by the proposer that demonstrate the capability of the Proposer to do the following: a) Serve as REB System Operator, including functional supervision of partner programs, facility, and personnel in the REB Career Centers." Does that mean state staff partners?

Yes, it means partner program staff, including state partner staff.

37. Is it possible to add additional attachments such as a flow chart or org chart?

The intention was to limit attachments so as not to be flooded with them. Decision now being made to allow up to 3 attachments in addition to the 25 pages, within reason.

Point of further clarification: Request that the "up to 3" attachments not exceed a total of 5 pages.

Concluded, emphasizing mandatory Letter of Intent due Friday, September 2, 2016 and Proposals due Wednesday, October 19th by 4:00 p.m.