



Request for Proposals:

Employer Engagement Services Contractor

**Proposals Due: 5:00 PM EST
September 18, 2020**

**Partner4Work
650 Smithfield Street, Suite 2600
Pittsburgh, PA 15222**

**Date Released:
August 24, 2020**

Partner4Work (TRWIB, Inc.) is an equal opportunity employer.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.

Background Information: What is an Industry Partnership?

An Industry Partnership (IP) convenes employers from the same region and industry, empowering them to work collaboratively to define key challenges, priorities, and goals. The workforce development board either directly or indirectly through contractors and collaboration with intermediary organizations sets priorities for employer recruitment, engages employers in the IP and strengthens their engagement, provides administrative functions (such as coordinating meetings, bringing about access to resources, expertise, and capacity, and managing communications), coordinates continuous improvement, and supports development of a sustainability strategy, so that employers are free to focus on sharing ideas, generating solutions, and identifying opportunities. The IP receives ongoing assistance from its Regional Support Team, a carefully selected group of partners representing the workforce development, economic development, and education sectors. These partners bring resources, expertise, and capacity to help design and execute solutions, ensuring that businesses are supported at every step.

Industry partnerships place employers in the driver's seat. This means that individual employers are asked to play an important leadership role, for example by championing the IP, recruiting additional members, providing resources including financial support, lending their expertise, or championing and/or serving on an action team focused on addressing an IP priority. Additionally, depending on the industry, industry leaders such as multi-employer organizations, unions, and labor-management partnerships may play a key role. Partner4Work (P4W) coordinates the convening of these leaders to agree on shared priorities in response to industry needs, strategize on the solutions including thought leadership on the use of P4W resources, and activate implementation of the strategies.

Partner4Work's IPs are based on labor market information that demonstrates a need for more workers/talent in the Pittsburgh/Allegheny County region, and validation of it by industry employers. Through these industry partnerships, P4W can ensure that the public workforce system delivers a true supply-demand model of services. Currently, Partner4Work is supporting nine IPs in high-priority industries including: construction, education, financial services, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, public sector, retail & hospitality, and transportation & logistics.

Business services provided by PA CareerLink® can assist in meeting IP priorities. These services are typically transactional in nature and include the publicizing of available positions, recruitment and referral of potential candidates for available positions, and the coordination of job fairs to educate the public about the availability of jobs and resources. In the context of IPs, PA CareerLink® is a member of the IP's Regional Support Team, whose services are responsive to IP priorities and aligned so they are best able to achieve the priorities.

To build capacity in building and sustaining IPs, Partner4Work is soliciting applications for an **Employer Engagement Services Contractor**. This provider will assist Partner4Work with its IP partnerships as outlined in the Statement of Need and Attachment B: Partners and Roles below.

Who We Are

Partner4Work (formerly the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board) is the workforce development organization that connects funding, expertise, and opportunities to develop a thriving workforce in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. With a budget of nearly \$25 million in public and private workforce funds, Partner4Work (P4W) delivers a comprehensive portfolio of programs and initiatives for adults

and youth to ensure that current and future needs of employers, job seekers, and underemployed workers are met.

Industry Partnerships provide a fundamental strategy for P4W in meeting the priority needs of employers and doing so in ways that benefit job seekers, underemployed workers, and the Pittsburgh area's economic vitality. Examples may include development of regional talent pipelines in high-demand industries and occupations that address employer skill shortages, purposeful career pathways for job seekers, workers, and youth, changes in hiring requirements that broaden labor pools, improvements in job quality that result in higher employee engagement and lower turnover, and strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion in ways that benefit both overall economic vitality and employers' business and civic goals.

Statement of Need

The Employer Engagement Services Contractor (Contractor) will have responsibility for aspects of P4W's strategic employer engagement process identified in "Required Project Activities" section of this RFP. The process includes but is not limited to the following:

- Consult with P4W leadership on strategies for engaging employers and other IP leaders.
- Host conversations with industry leaders to learn industry needs including but not limited to talent sourcing; incumbent training; job quality, diversity, equity, and inclusion; and anticipated future disruption prevention.
- Build and maintain relationships with employers in Allegheny County and other industry leaders in order to recruit them as IP members, share the story of P4W and IPs with employers and others, and make introductions of and referrals to all Partner4Work staff as needed.
- Coordinate and conduct meetings with employers to help them understand benefits of IPs that are important to them, including workforce system services, and identify benefits of an IP they want to obtain and IP-related responsibilities they are interested in and ready to act on.
- Engage IP membership in identifying industry priorities and reviewing and vetting use of P4W resources such as relevant training programs to ensure that the public workforce system is meeting their expectations.
- Determine IP members' forecasted short, medium, and long-term hiring and skill needs.
- Strategically strengthen IP member engagement as employers as well as specific industry leaders can be interested in championing the IP, recruiting additional members, providing resources including financial support, lending their expertise, championing and/or serving on an action team focused on addressing an IP priority, and/or become more engaged in the public workforce system through the system with a managed care process.
- Connect with referral partners such as members of IP-specific Regional Support Teams, carefully selected groups of community partners representing the workforce development, economic development, and education sectors that provide on-going assistance to a specific IP. These partners bring specialized resources, expertise, and capacity to help design and execute solutions. (Please see Attachment B for more information about each partner's roles and responsibilities.)

The Contractor will play a major role in recruiting employers and other industry leaders to participate in Industry Partnerships (IPs). As requested, the Employer Engagement Support Coordinator will create target lists and plans to attract specific employers and industry leaders such as industry associations. To

facilitate this role, the Contractor may maintain a database of employers with information such as their engagement in an IP.

The Contractor will collaborate closely with P4W staff and, as requested by P4W leadership, provide training and professional development sessions and mentor/coach members of the IP staff.

Partner4Work is seeking an employer engagement contractor that has a strong knowledge of the key industries outlined above to more fully engage employers in its nine Industry Partnerships, establish Industry Partnership priorities that address key industry needs, and guide Partner4Work and public workforce system services based on industry needs and priorities, as described below. The successful applicant will have the capacity and expertise to collaborate with P4W to plan an effective employer and to execute the plan. The successful applicant will also have a proven ability to collaborate with non-profit, government, and industry partners to achieve outcomes.

Required Applicant Qualifications

1. Proposals will be accepted from any of the following: individuals, private for-profit agencies, private non-profit organizations, government agencies, or educational institutions that can demonstrate the capacity to successfully provide the services identified in this RFP.
2. As a provider of Industry Partnership (IP) related employer engagement services in Allegheny County, the selected applicant(s) will actively participate with Partner4Work (P4W) in shaping and informing the local workforce development system. As such, the selected applicant(s) will demonstrate strong relationships with area employers within the nine targeted industry(ies). The provider will also demonstrate knowledge of and expertise in:
 - A. Working on employer engagement in IPs;
 - B. Understanding of strategies for engaging employers, including but not limited to strategies for meeting their needs in ways that benefit job seekers, underemployed workers, and the Pittsburgh area's economic vitality. Examples may include development of regional talent pipelines in high-demand industries and occupations that address employer skill shortages, purposeful career pathways for job seekers, workers, and youth, changes in hiring requirements that broaden labor pools, improvements in job quality that result in higher employee engagement and lower turnover, and strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion in ways that benefit both overall economic vitality and employers' business and civic goals.
 - C. Working with a workforce development board in Pennsylvania

Required Project Activities

1. Consult with P4W leadership on strategies for engaging employers and other Industry Partnership (IP) leaders.
2. Work under the direction of Partner4Work to
 - A. Provide input and guidance to Partner4Work Leadership and its Industry Partnership staff on development and expansion of Industry Partnerships, including but not limited to identifying shared needs and priorities of specific industry sectors, and sharing relevant research and business intelligence.
 - B. Identify and network with local employers and industry experts to learn about industry needs Partner4Work's nine IPs may meet including but not limited to talent sourcing; incumbent training; job quality, diversity, equity, and inclusion; and anticipated future disruption prevention.

- C. With the objective of having 3 to 20 employer members (depending on the industry) in Partner4Work's IPs, build and maintain relationships with employers in Allegheny County and other industry leaders in order to identify employer challenges, industry priorities, and potential opportunities, recruit them as IP members, share the story of P4W and IPs with employers and others, and make introductions of and referrals to all Partner4Work staff whenever there is an opportunity to do so. Conduct related employer outreach including but not limited to cold calls, networking, and following up with potential leads. Document the conversations/outcomes.
 - D. Drive efforts on behalf of Partner4Work to create an inclusive fast-paced system that responds to the needs of industry in real time, and work closely with its IP staff to do so.
 - E. Help design meeting agendas, coordinate, and as needed conduct or participate in meetings with employers to help them understand benefits of IPs that are important to them, including workforce system services, and identify benefits of an IP they want to obtain and IP-related responsibilities they are interested in and ready to act on.
 - F. As needed conduct or participate in Industry Partnership meetings.
 - G. As needed, determine IP members' forecasted short-, medium-, and long-term hiring and skill needs.
 - H. As needed, connect with referral partners such as members of IP-specific Regional Support Teams, carefully selected groups of community partners representing the workforce development, economic development, and education sectors that provide on-going assistance to a specific IP. These partners bring specialized resources, expertise, and capacity to help design and execute solutions. (Please see Attachment B for more information about each partner's roles and responsibilities.)
 - I. Assist in obtaining information on IP outcomes, such as employer engagement, achievement of priorities, and financial stability.
 - J. Adjust service delivery and other program components based on feedback
- 3. Play a major role in recruiting employers and other industry leaders to participate in Partner4Work's nine IPs. As requested, create target lists and plans to attract specific employers and industry leaders such as industry associations. To facilitate this role, the Contractor may maintain a database of employers with information such as their engagement in an IP.
 - 4. Collaborate closely with P4W staff and, as requested by P4W leadership, provide training and professional development sessions and mentor/coach members of the IP staff.
 - 5. Be responsive to functional leadership at PA CareerLink® Pittsburgh/Allegheny County and supportive of all its programs, functions, and operations or other service delivery sites.
 - 6. To the extent resources are available to do so, carry out additional activities requested by Partner4Work's leadership. Examples of previous activities are assistance with an IBM Re-ignite project, a marketing material project, and a project to build connections with minority employers.

How to Apply

Proposals must be submitted by **5:00 PM on September 18, 2020**, to rfp@partner4work.org. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered. Proposals should contain the following information:

1. **Cover Sheet** – Use template provided (Appendix A).
2. **Executive Summary** (1-page maximum) that includes an overview of qualifications, including the number of years successfully providing services engaging employers in Industry Partnerships, the type of services provided, experience supporting the key industries outlined in the statement of need, and prior/current capabilities to quickly develop strong employer connections throughout southwest Pennsylvania.
3. **Capabilities Overview** (1-page maximum) that describes each of the following:
 - a. If applicable, basic organizational description, including but not limited to: year established, legal status, governance structure, mission, principal programs and services, executive leadership, annual budget, and the number of full-time staff.
 - b. A summary of experience in managing quality programs to engage employers in Industry Partnerships similar in number, size and scope to that required by this RFP, including but not limited to: employers served, services and activities delivered, contract values and related performance outcomes.
 - c. Administrative and fiscal capacity, including but not limited to proven ability to provide fiscal support and oversight, utilize information systems, manage resources and personnel, and produce timely and accurate program reports.
 - d. Agreement and capability to comply with Covid-19 guidance for Pennsylvania businesses issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in effect during the term of the contract.
4. **Program Narrative** Partner4Work is committed to providing high-quality employer engagement services to all nine high-priority industries. Describe each of the following for the proposed program approach: (limit 10 pages)
 - a. Demonstrate your relationships, knowledge, and expertise in response to Required Applicant Qualifications Number Two (2) and its subsections (A-C).
 - b. Employer Engagement Services:
 - i. Describe how you plan to effectively deliver the employer engagement services identified in the “Required Project Activities” section of the RFP and provide related experience that demonstrates success in doing so at a level similar to the number, size, and scope to that required by this RFP. (Highly rated responses will clearly demonstrate how the proposed plan connects employers to Partner4Work’s Industry Partnerships and provide examples.)
 - ii. Describe the plan to accomplish each of the following:
 1. How will you provide excellent customer service to employers, including methods of establishing and maintaining strong relationships, assessing employers’ alignment with criteria established by P4W and their commitment to achieving objectives of importance to Partner4Work, identifying their needs, and engaging employers in Industry Partnerships.
 2. How will you assist in implementing industry-specific strategies that

align with Partner4Work priorities, such as the following: meeting employer and industry needs in ways that benefit job seekers, underemployed workers, and the Pittsburgh area's economic vitality. Examples may include development of regional talent pipelines in high-demand industries and occupations that address employer skill shortages, purposeful career pathways for job seekers, workers, and youth, changes in hiring requirements that broaden labor pools, improvements in job quality that result in higher employee engagement and lower turnover, and strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion in ways that benefit both overall economic vitality and employers' business and civic goals.

- c. Success in engaging employers. Provide the number of employers you have engaged in Industry Partnerships, and one example or more of Industry Partnership-related employer engagement services and related outcomes.
- d. Connecting employers to appropriate Partner4Work IP staff and/or external partners: Describe the plan for effectively connecting employers to Partner4Work IP staff, and where relevant, providing information needed so IP staff can engage, or have you engage, the public workforce system or other partners, including how you will effectively communicate employer needs such as :
 - i. Employment and skill development needs
 - ii. Employee retention/turnover needs
- e. Describe the process for responding to requests for other services TBD, such as Special Projects assigned by Executive Leadership

5. **Budget:** Total program budget may not exceed **\$96,700**; this funding is from the Hillman Foundation. Partner4Work may renew the contract resulting from this RFP, at its sole discretion and subject to need, availability of funds, and performance.
- a. Budget for all program-related and administrative costs. All costs must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary according to applicable federal, state and local regulations, including but not limited to the Uniform Guidance and any funding restrictions. Effective budgets will show all costs and enable the proposed program to meet the intent and requirements of the contract, while being realistic, reasonable and prudent, avoiding unnecessary or unusual expenditures.
 - b. A narrative that justifies the budget and describes the purpose and calculation of each line item including indirect costs, administrative costs, and profit (if applicable). A narrative that additionally estimates the cost for delivering each of the six (6) items identified in the Required Project Activities section of this RFP, and any additional costs required to deliver items a-d in the Program Narrative section of this RFP. The extent to which a respondent can carry out the work identified in the project activities and program narrative while minimizing indirect costs, administrative costs, and profit will be a factor in the evaluation process.
 - c. Describe any leveraged or in-kind services or donations, including cash contributions, fee-for-service or other revenue generation, and in-kind contributions. List the source and dollar value of each leverage resource, as well as the role it plays in the program.
 - d. Partner4Work may, at its sole discretion, establish a contract with payment based on deliverables, based on cost reimbursement, or based on a hybrid of deliverables and cost reimbursement.

Review and Selection Process

Partner4Work will review proposals according to the required content described in the How to Apply section with attention to clarity, completeness, and quality. High scoring proposals will clearly demonstrate an ability and likelihood to meet or exceed the standards and intended outcomes of these programs. Scoring for the required sections of the proposal will be assigned as follows:

Proposal Review Scoring Rubric	
Cover Sheet	Required, but not scored
Executive Summary	Required, but not scored
Organizational Overview	30
Program Narrative	50
Budget	20
Total Points	100

Timeline

Partner4Work aims to operationalize the Contractor by the end of Summer 2020. The estimated timeline may be subject to change.

- Release of Request for Proposals 8-24-2020
- Due Date for RFP related questions 9-3-2020 (5 PM)
- FAQ release date 9-8-2020 (5 PM)
- Proposals Due 9-18-2020 (5 PM)
- Selection 9-24-2020
- Contract Start Date 10-1-2020

Questions?

We welcome your questions and look forward to hearing from you. All questions or requests for additional information must be made in writing to rfp@partner4work.org. Answers will be posted at www.partner4work.org to make them available to the public to ensure a fair and transparent process.

Disclaimers

- This Request for Proposal does not commit Partner4Work to award a contract.
- Partner4Work may make funding decisions based on the initial proposal received, without discussion of the proposal with the applicant. Accordingly, each proposal should be submitted on the strongest terms that the bidder can submit to Partner4Work.
- Partner4Work retains the right to request additional information from any applicant, before a contract award.
- No costs will be paid to cover the expense of preparing a proposal or procuring a contract for services or supplies.
- All data, material, and documentation originated and prepared by the bidder pursuant to the contract shall belong exclusively to the Partner4Work and be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, Right to Know Law, or other applicable legislation.

- The contract award will not be final until Partner4Work and the successful applicant have executed a mutually satisfactory contractual agreement. Partner4Work reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposal submitted. No activity may begin prior to final Partner4Work approval of the award and execution of a contractual agreement between the successful applicant and Partner4Work.
- The submission of the proposal warrants that the costs quoted for services in response to the RFP are not in excess of those that would be charged to any other individual for the same services performed by the applicant.
- Applicants are advised that most documents in the possession of Partner4Work are considered public records and subject to disclosure. Partner4Work reserves the right to issue additional RFPs if and when it is in Partner4Work's best interest to do so and may elect to negotiate and issue multi-year contracts to successful bidders under this or subsequent RFPs. Partner4Work reserves the right to fund portions of a proposal, or to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part. Rejection of a portion of a proposal does not necessarily negate the entire proposal.
- All programs and activities are designated as equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact staff to request assistance with access to this RFP.
- Please note that requirements contained in this RFP may change based on revised local, state, and federal rules. Therefore, proposers will be required to make staffing and programmatic modifications to accommodate the changes throughout the life of the agreement.
- The selected contractor(s) will be required to supply evidence of appropriate licenses, insurance, relevant internal procedures, etc., prior to contract execution. The list of required documentation will be provided by Partner4Work upon selection through the RFP process. Partner4Work, in soliciting requests for proposals, shall not discriminate against any person or organization(s) submitting a response pursuant to this Request for Proposal because of race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnic group, national origin, or other basis prohibited by law.

APPENDIX A

Request for Proposals Cover Sheet

Lead Applicant: Click or tap here to enter text.

A. Contact Information

Organization Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Address: Click or tap here to enter text.

City: Click or tap here to enter text. State: Click or tap here to enter text. Zip Code: Click or tap here to enter text.

Principal Contact Person: Click or tap here to enter text. Title: Click or tap here to enter text.

Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx Fax: xxx-xxx-xxxx Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Fiscal Contact Person: Click or tap here to enter text. Title: Click or tap here to enter text.

Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx Fax: xxx-xxx-xxxx Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Executive Director: Click or ap here to enter text.

Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx Fax: xxx-xxx-xxxx Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

B. Legal Information

Type of organization: For-profit: Non-Profit: Government: Education Institution

Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN): Click or tap here to enter text.

C. Requirements / Documents *(proposals submitted without these documents will be considered incomplete, please see associated links for more information and instructions as to how to acquire them) Please note that a single copy of all requirements below must be submitted for EACH Partner, in addition to the lead applicant (if applicable).*

- Registration in the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM)
- Certificate of Liability Insurance
- Certificate of Worker's Compensation Insurance
- W9

D. Additional Requirements

- Agree to Use Partner4Work's Contract Management Software, Parley Pro, for Contract Negotiation
- By submitting your proposal you certify that you are compliant with the following [PA state integrity policy](#). If you are not, please submit along with your proposal a written explanation of why such certification cannot be made

Appendix B: Partners and Roles

Partner Roles and Responsibilities	
Partner4Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate regional Industry Partnerships in the following key industries: construction, education, financial services, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, public sector, retail & hospitality, and transportation & logistics. • Set policies and establish outcomes to support each IP. • Serve as liaison to participating employers • Direct fund development strategies and initiatives • Oversee local recruitment efforts • Procure and monitor sub-contracted program provider(s) • Advise on sourcing of key business services staff • Evaluate program and report outcomes • Organize and identify partners for the Regional Support Team or for IP program expansion
Regional Support Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give on-going assistance and expertise in the workforce development, economic development and education sectors • Provide awareness of services and opportunities within the workforce system and enhancing partnerships and relationships with area agencies that bolster workforce development efforts. • Collaborate, coordinate and establish strong referral relationships with the stakeholders and initiatives that comprise the larger workforce development and social service systems in Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, including other service providers and the PA CareerLink® System.
PA Careerlink® Title I Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and serve un/underemployed individuals in the Pittsburgh/Allegheny County region through job readiness training • Coordinate training efforts to reflect the needs of high priority industries • Deliver customized business services to support employers with recruitment, job placement, upskilling, and retention.
Contracted Employer Engagement Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As described in this RFP.