

**LACKAWANNA COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(WDB)**

**Transitional Assistance for Needy Families
(TANF)**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
(RFP)**

RFP RELEASE DATE: December 20, 2021

**PROPOSAL DUE DATE:
January 19, 2022; 4:30 P.M.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION.....	PAGE 3
SECTION 2 - AWARD INFORMATION.....	PAGE 3
SECTION 3 - ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	PAGE 4
SECTION 4 - BACKGROUND.....	PAGE 5
SECTION 5 - APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION.....	PAGE 5
SECTION 6 - APPLICATION AND REVIEW CRITERIA.....	PAGE 6
SECTION 7 - AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION.....	PAGE 9
SECTION 8 - SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS.....	PAGE 9
SECTION 9 - OTHER INFORMATION.....	PAGE 10

Submit application(s) to:

- One hard copy with original signature in blue ink to Mr. Brian Jeffers, Chief of Staff, Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners, 123 Wyoming Avenue, 6th Floor, Scranton, PA 18503
- One electronic copy to Ms. Virginia Turano, Executive Director, Lackawanna County WDB at vturano@wiblackawanna.org

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit applications for the provision of short-term projects under the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board's TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) grant. The age requirement for participants is between 12 (or having completed the 5th grade) and 24 years of age inclusive who are TANF recipients or whose personal gross countable earned income does not exceed 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. Participants will be required to provide eligibility information prior to enrollment in any activity.

Due to TANF regulations, projects must now be structured to address one or more of the following program elements:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services;
- Paid and unpaid work experience with an academic and occupational educational component;
- Leadership development activities, e.g., community service, peer-centered activities.
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring;
- Follow-up services for at least 12 months after program completion;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling;
- Integrated education and training for a specific occupation or cluster;
- Financial literacy education;
- Entrepreneurial skills training;
- Services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and
- Postsecondary preparation and transition activities.

Activities that will be given high consideration are those that fully engage students and provide a hands-on, structured learning experience such as focused educational activities, career camps, interactive/introduction projects related to STEM/STEAM occupations, work experience opportunities (minimum wage reimbursement of \$12.00/hour), or a combination of the above. If the need arises, can this project be transitioned to a virtual platform? If yes, please specifically describe.

Proposals must describe, in detail, the project's relationship to one or more of the listed elements.

This RFP outlines the requirements necessary to obtain TANF grant funding.

SECTION 2 – AWARD INFORMATION

- A. **Project Sponsor:** This RFP is offered by the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board (WDB) utilizing Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds.

- B. **Application Deadline:** **Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 4:30 P.M. Eastern Time**
- C. **Estimated Funding:** Approximately \$125,000 will be awarded based on the number of grants received and the availability of funds.
- D. **Anticipated Award Size:** The Lackawanna County WDB anticipates individual awards in the range of a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$30,000.
- E. Awardees will be required to submit a written monthly progress report (within 5 days of the end of each preceding month), detailing all activity for the month, number of participants involved, goals attained, etc. A final, end-of-project report must be submitted to the WDB within 15 days of the completion of the activity. If approved, the awardee will be required to attend a project information/planning session prior to the start of any activities.
- F. **Period of Performance:** The Lackawanna County WDB anticipates a performance period under this RFP beginning **March 1, 2022 and ending August 31, 2022**. NOTE: any/all proposed activity must begin and complete within this time frame. Continuation of any on-going activity will not be considered for funding.

SECTION 3 – ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- A. **Eligible Applicants:** Eligible applicants include educational institutions, non-profit and community-based organizations, and private-for-profit entities.
- B. **Eligible Participants:** **All individuals participating in a TANF project must be verified as a qualified TANF participant. To be considered a qualified participant, an individual must**
- 1. Be between the ages of 12 (or having completed the 5th grade) and 24 years**
 - 2. Have his/her identity verified through a Social Security Number**
 - 3. Be a Lackawanna County, PA resident**
 - 4. Be a United States citizen or a TANF-eligible non-citizen**
 - 5. Have a personal monthly gross income that does not exceed 235% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines**

Note: Gross income will be verified only at the time of enrollment. Only the youth's personal monthly gross earned income will be used to establish the youth as a qualified participant, unless the youth is legally married and/or has children. In those instances, the youth and their spouse's gross income will be used and the family's household size will include the youth, spouse and any of his/her child(ren) residing with them.

Youth may self-certify if they do not have earned income.

- C. **Prioritization of Services and Activities:** The Lackawanna County WDB will prioritize enrollment to those eligible youth with any of the following barriers to success:
- School dropout or identified as at risk of dropping out of school.
 - Within the age of compulsory attendance, but has not attended for at least the most recent

- complete school year calendar quarter.
- Basic skills deficient.
- An English language learner.
- Have a disability.
- Court-involved or at risk of involvement.
- Children of an incarcerated parent.
- In foster care or aging out of foster care.
- Homeless or runaway.
- Pregnant or parenting.
- A migrant.
- In need of additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

SECTION 4 – BACKGROUND

For nearly two decades, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has provided significant funding support from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant to enhance workforce investment funding and ensure that high-quality workforce development activities are available to low income youth. Throughout the years, the Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Labor & Industry (L & I) have partnered with local workforce development boards and their youth councils/committees to encourage the development of workforce programs for needy and at-risk youth. These programs provide employment, educational experiences, and essential skills, such as financial literacy and time management. It has long been recognized that young people who have a summer job or other work experience are more likely to succeed in the job market during their adult lives and that high school seniors employed part-time are expected to earn approximately 20% more as adults six to nine years after graduation than their peers who did not work. This shows that work experience, career exploration, and career readiness are vital to the economic success of the young people in our community.

SECTION 5 – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- A. **Address to Request Application Package:** The TANF RFP may be requested through submission of an email to Virginia Turano, WDB Executive Director, at vturano@wiblackawanna.org.
- B. **Mandatory Attachments:** Applicants must submit the following documents:
1. **Project Summary:** Applicants must include a maximum, one-page summary of the proposed activity(ies).
 2. **Project Narrative:** Applicants must submit a Project Narrative, formatted to clearly address each of the ***Merit Review Criteria*** as detailed in Section 6 of this RFP. Sufficient information must be provided so that reviewers will be able to evaluate the application with these merit criteria. Evaluators will review and consider only those applications that address EACH of the Merit Review Criterion. The Project Narrative must **not exceed ten (10) one-sided pages**, including a cover letter with original signatures, table of contents, the required Project Summary, project description (in accordance with the Merit Review Criteria questions), and any additional charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations when printed using standard 8.5" by 11" paper with 1" margins (top, bottom,

left, and right) [single spaced]. **Evaluators will review only the number of pages as specified in the preceding sentence.** Page numbers must be provided in the footer. Do not include any Internet addresses (URLs) that provide information necessary to review the application.

3. **Budget:** Applicants must submit a detailed Budget utilizing the budget format as included in the RFP package. The budget will be evaluated in terms of cost reasonableness and the relationship to the proposed activity(ies). Budgets must be for the time period commencing on March 1, 2022 through August 31, 2022. The WDB reserves the right to unilaterally modify application budgets prior to, and/or after grant award. The Budget **does not** count toward the ten (10) page limit of the Project Narrative.
4. **Budget Justification:** Applicants must justify, **in detail and by line item**, the costs proposed in each object cost classification category; the general categories of supplies and amount for each category; and any other information to support the budget. The Budget Justification **does not** count toward the ten (10) page limit of the Project Narrative.

SECTION 6 - APPLICATION REVIEW AND CRITERIA

A. Criteria

1. **Initial Review Criteria:** Prior to a comprehensive merit evaluation, Lackawanna County and WDB executive staff will perform an initial review to determine that (1) that applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by this RFP announcement has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements are satisfied; and (4) the proposed project is responsive to the purpose of the RFP.
2. **Merit Review Criteria:** The comprehensive merit evaluation will be conducted by a review team who will score the proposals based on the degree to which the proposal addresses each of the following required criterion.

Criterion 1: Project Approach and Management Plan (50 points)

- Describe your overall objectives and design. (10 points)
- Describe how your project(s) address connections to STEM/STEAM occupational fields and/or computer fields (5 points)
- If the project(s) proposed has been conducted before, describe, in detail, its merits and why it should be replicated. If it is a new project(s), describe the rationale for its development and submission. (10 points)
- Describe how the project(s) addresses one or more of the program elements, identified by element(s) that are listed in Section 1 of this RFP. (5 points)
- Describe the desired outcomes (i.e., # of participants enrolled and completing; age range of participants; length of activity(ies); credentials, if any, to be received; wages or stipends, if applicable based on activity(ies), etc.) (10 points)
- Describe the method of implementation that allows for service to those individuals identified for Prioritization of Services in Section 3 of this RFP. (5 points)
- Describe the short-term project timeline to include implementation steps and desired outcomes. (5 points)

Criterion 2: Applicant Capabilities (20 points)

- Identify the qualifications of proposed project staff (i.e., copy of resume or credentials may be attached) including verification of applicable clearances (valid only for 60 months) [identify personnel by name and qualifications]. (4 points)
- Identify the ability of the applicant to coordinate and implement the proposed project. (4 points)
- Briefly Identify the roles and responsibilities of each assigned staff. (4 points)
- Identify applicant's prior track record, if applicable, including performance goals and outcome information of previous project(s). If this is a new project, applicable points will be awarded. (4 points)
- Describe your organization's ability to comply with any/all record compilation, monitoring efforts, and maintenance requirements. (4 points)

Criterion 3: Potential Impact (10 points)

- Describe the overall impact this proposed project(s), as described, will have on the involved participants. What tangible outcomes are perceived? (5 points)
- Describe how the proposed project(s) addresses the examples listed for high consideration in Section 1 of this RFP. (5 points)

Criterion 4: Fiscal Standards (2.5 points)

- Include a statement of financial health and copy of the most recent audit including identification of any audit finding(s) for the past 2 years and plan of action taken for correction.

Criterion 5: Budget Form and Budget Justification (17.5 points)

- Provide a complete budget, broken down by line item, on the budget form included in this RFP. (7.5 points)
- Provide a detailed budget justification. You must provide a detailed breakout of quantity, cost and narrative to support each line item of the budget, reflective of the scope of the project(s) and number of participants to be served. If staff will be funded with TANF funds, provide a description of the duties and responsibilities of each staff person to be funded. (7.5 points)
- Please identify a cost per participant and justify its rationale. (2.5 points)

B. Other Selection Factors

All applications received by the deadline and in conformation to the specifications of this RFP will be considered for funding. Favorable consideration will be given to applicants that demonstrate the following:

1. Innovation – The degree to which a proposal is innovative in providing substantial hands-on, career-related/planning activities to TANF youth.
2. Cost Efficiency – An emphasis on service delivery with minimal project management costs.
3. Alignment – The degree to which a proposal aligns with the PA DHS and PA DOLI

standards.

Discussions and Award

The Lackawanna County WDB may enter into discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including but not limited to: (1) the budget is not appropriate or reasonable for the requirement; (2) only a portion of the application is selected for award; (3) the Lackawanna County WDB needs additional information to determine that the recipient is capable of complying with reporting requirements; and/or (4) special terms and conditions are required. Failure to satisfactorily resolve the issues identified by the Lackawanna county WDB within a specific period determined by the WDB may preclude award to the applicant.

C. Anticipated Notice of Selection and Award Dates

The Lackawanna County WDB anticipates notifying applicants selected for award within 20 days of the award determination. Funds will be available for use during the period of March 1, 2022 through August 31, 2022.

D. Submissions from Successful Applicants

The Lackawanna County WDB reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information from successful applicants for any reason deemed necessary.

E. Submission Dates and Times

Application submissions **MUST BE RECEIVED** by **Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 4:30 P.M.**

F. Funding Restrictions

The number of proposals selected for funding will be based upon the number of proposals submitted, the funding available, and how those proposals accomplish and achieve the activities outlined in Section C.A.2 of this RFP.

1. Allowable Costs

Funds available through this RFP must be used to create or expand a TANF-eligible project that addresses one or more of the items as listed in Section 1 of this RFP. Allowable costs include: project management costs; consumable supplies supporting activities; meal/snack costs; travel/busing, if defined; associated activity fees; books; printed materials; facility expense; insurance; clearance costs; and/or other miscellaneous operating costs that are well-defined.

Any request for non-consumable purchases will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2. Disallowed Costs

- Purchasing equipment;
- Building construction;

- Procuring lobbying services.

Pre-award costs are incurred at the applicant's risk. The Lackawanna County WDB is under no obligation to reimburse such costs if for any reason the applicant does not receive an award or if the award is made for a lesser amount than the applicant expected. No funds will be made available before March 1, 2022.

G. Other Submission and Registration Requirements

Application packages must be submitted as follows by the application deadline for consideration:

- One hard copy with original signature to Mr. Brian Jeffers, Chief of Staff, Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners, 123 Wyoming Avenue, 6th Floor, Scranton, PA 18503
- One electronic copy to Ms. Virginia Turano, Executive Director, Lackawanna County WDB at vturano@wiblackawanna.org

SECTION 7 - AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

Each applicant shall be notified in writing within 20 days after the award decision is made regarding submitted application(s).

B. Reporting

Applicants awarded funding must submit a monthly progress report as well as a final outcomes report at the conclusion of the project. Awardees will be required to gather and report a variety of demographic information required by the Commonwealth of PA. Awardees will be required to communicate with WDB administrative staff as determined by need and on request of said staff to identify grant progression, best practices, resolution of issues that may arise, award expenditures, etc.

SECTION 8 - QUESTIONS

A. Questions

Any/all questions regarding the content of this RFP must be submitted electronically in writing to Ms. Virginia Turano at vturano@wiblackawanna.org by close of business on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. Any/all questions received will be answered in writing and posted to the www.lcwdb.org and www.pacareerlinklackawanna.org websites by 4:30 PM on Friday, January 7, 2022.

SECTION 9 - OTHER INFORMATION

A. Right to Reject or Negotiate

The Lackawanna County WDB reserves the right, without qualification, to reject any or all applications received in response to this announcement and to select any application, in whole or in part, as a basis for negotiation and/or award.

B. Commitment of Funds

Any/all funds awarded under this RFP will be approved by the Lackawanna County WDB and disbursed through the County of Lackawanna, serving as the Fiscal Agent for the local WDB. Financial Agreements and Payment Schedules will be approved at a regular meeting of the Lackawanna County Board of Commissioners. A commitment by anyone or any entity other than the contracting officer, either explicit or implied, is invalid.

C. Project Monitoring

Any awardee ensures compliance with any/all monitoring processes and procedures during and/or after the project period by representatives of the Lackawanna County WDB and/or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor and Industry/Department of Human Services.

TANF BUDGET FORM

Project Period: March 1, 2022 - August 31, 2022

COSTS:

Project Management Costs	
Project Staff Salaries	
Project Staff Benefits	
Other Project Management Costs (specifically defined in Justification)	
Project Operational Costs	
Fees (i.e., admission to educational events/activities)	
Books (per person) (Please itemize in Budget Justification)	
Printing & Materials	
Facility Expense (applicable rental costs)	
Transportation Costs (i.e, field trips)	
Supplies (Please itemize in Budget Justification)	
Meals/Snacks, if applicable	
Insurance	
Supportive Services (describe in detail in Budget Justification)	
Incentives (describe in detail including rationale in Budget Justification)	
Stipends	
Clearance Costs, if necessary	
Miscellaneous Other Operational Costs (describe in detail in Justification)	
TOTAL BUDGET	

The accompanying Budget Justification must include a breakdown in the number of hours per week, the number of planned weeks of activity, and the cost per head/participant.