



northeastern

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Serving Aroostook, Washington, Penobscot, Hancock, and Piscataquis Counties

Request for Application (RFA) **Community-Based Organization (CBO) Partnership**

Submit Responses to:

Northeastern Workforce Development Workforce Development Board
26 Franklin Street, PO Box 737
Bangor, Maine 04401

Release Date: September 6, 2024

Applications Due: October 4, 2024

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

RFA Issuer Information

The Northeastern Workforce Development Board (NWDB), serving the five counties of Aroostook, Washington, Penobscot, Hancock, and Piscataquis counties in the State of Maine, is issuing this Request for Application (RFA) with fiscal agent County of Penobscot.

The NWDB with fiscal agent County of Penobscot serves as the region's workforce development organization whose mission is to champion a workforce and learning system that allows the five-county region to produce a vibrant economy and lifelong employment and training opportunities for its residents.

The NWDB website, www.northeasternwdb.org, will be the mode of communication for NWDB posting all related grant information. Interested applicants can email questions directly to Galan Williamson at gwilliamson@northeasternwdb.org. All questions and responses will be posted publicly on the website no later than close of business September 16, 2024.

Procurement Timeline

Release Date: September 6, 2024
Question Submission Deadline: September 16, 2024
Question Responses Posted to Website: September 18, 2024
Application Deadline: October 4, 2024

Terms and Acronyms

QUEST: Quality jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training

CBO: Community-based Organization, meaning a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that— (A) is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and (B) provides educational, supportive, or related services to individuals in the community.

WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

DWG: Dislocated Worker Grant

TEGL: Training and Guidance Letter

NWDB Region: Counties of Aroostook, Washington, Penobscot, Hancock and Piscataquis

Purpose of RFA

This QUEST DWG funding opportunity may provide valuable solutions to hiring, **retention**, and other staffing challenges, particularly employers hiring workers into high-quality jobs and employers which aim to improve the quality of their jobs. Allowable activities in this grant emphasize the importance of providing comprehensive, necessary supportive services, including childcare, transportation, housing, mental health supports, and other allowable services for participants to enable them to successfully

complete grant activities and meet their planned employment and training goals. In this pursuit, the QUEST funding opportunity seeks to engage workforce and business partners through the framework of restorative practices as a **retention** strategy and cultivating **good jobs** as described in link provided: [Good Jobs Principles \(dol.gov\)](#).

Background

While the overall economy continues to rebound from the pandemic, the emerging new economy is not benefiting all industry sectors and populations equally. The most negatively impacted workers from the pandemic continue to face persistent challenges in finding quality jobs amidst the ongoing economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis. The QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) identifies the priority population to be served as:

- low wage workers
- women with dependent care challenges
- racial and ethnic minorities
- immigrants and refugees
- individuals with disabilities
- discouraged workers
- justice involved or incarcerated individuals who will be released in the next 12 months
- individuals in recovery from substance use disorder
- individuals from historically marginalized communities

Nearly all these groups have not regained their pre-pandemic employment rates and continue to experience the most significant employment barriers. The QUEST DWG will support those individuals who have suffered the most by providing equitable access to work at safe and competitively compensating employment which further builds their own and the community's resilience.

Disclaimers and General Provisions

- This RFA does not commit the NWDB to award a contract.
- The NWDB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received, and to accept or reject portions of proposals received.
- The final contract award amount will be **\$35,964**.
- All data, material, and documentation originated and prepared by the applicant shall belong exclusively to the NWDB and be subject to disclosure under public records and/or the Freedom of Information Act.
- Applicants selected must have a familiarity with QUEST DWG, WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker, and WIOA Youth programs. TEGs can be found on the NWDB's website.
- To be eligible to receive funds, CBO's must be a 501c3 nonprofit or have a fiscal sponsor.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be a Maine community-based organization that serves residents of at least one of the five counties served by the NWDB. When considering an applicant, the NWDB will consider the

applicant's reputation in the non-profit community, background in restorative practices, the depth of the applicant's understanding of and experience with WIOA programs, and the applicant's demonstrated ability to provide services to the populations targeted by WIOA programs.

Deliverables

- Develop and deliver minimally a two-hour restorative practice training course to 100% WIOA staff serving the assigned geographic area. The training shall include the following topics: Overview of restorative practices with a focus on what a community of restorative practices means in the workplace, how to handle difficult workplace situations with restorative skill set, gives managers and WIOA staff a restorative tool kit to facilitate restorative conversations and dialogue with staff or participants.
 - Ensure two superusers from WIOA providers are provided a certified restorative facilitator training course as a sustainability strategy.
 - Host monthly "Community of Restorative Workplace Practices" sessions for ongoing technical assistance and coaching opportunities for identified superusers for duration of the grant.
 - Collaborate with the WIOA provider to identify at least five active participants from the QUEST grant to participate in a restorative circle/dialogue. Participation in the circles/dialogues are strictly voluntary by all parties and shall include representation from a host worksite/eligible training provider, or employer, the participant, assigned WIOA staff, and other community members as identified. The reason for referral must be for one or more of the following reasons: conflict with co-worker or supervisor, communication problems, poor participant performance/engagement.
 - Ensure each representative party in the restorative circle/dialogue is provided a satisfaction survey to complete within 10 days of the circle/dialogue and results of the survey will be anonymously shared with NWDB staff and WIOA leadership for quality review and analysis of the services delivered.
 - Develop a budget and implementation plan that outlines staff salaries, associated costs, and the timeframe for the proposal and timeline on achieving deliverables outlined in this section:
 - One two-hour training program for all staff (delivered as one training, as a standalone on-demand virtual training, and/or on multiple dates at different sites),
 - Certify two restorative facilitator trainers,
 - Facilitate monthly "Community of Restorative Workplace Practices" sessions,
 - Facilitate five circle/dialogue sessions for QUEST participants in their workplaces,
 - Develop and manage participant satisfaction surveys for circles/dialogues,
 - Business engagement activities.
- Work can begin October 14th, 2024 and must conclude by September 30th, 2025.
- Provide quarterly reports as required under QUEST grant.

Applicant Narrative

CBO applicants should use the application attached with the RFA. Applications can also be found on the NWDB website. Each section should be no more than 500 words. Electronic and mail-in proposals will be accepted. Complete proposals can be mailed to the address on page one or emailed to

mleighton@northeasternwdb.org no later than 5:00pm on October 4, 2024. No proposals will be accepted after this date and time.

1. Background of Organization

Provide a synopsis of your organization identifying its history of being a Maine community-based organization serving residents of at least one of the five counties served by the NWDB. Address your organization’s reputation in the non-profit community, the depth of its understanding of and experience with WIOA programs, and its demonstrated ability to provide services to the populations targeted by WIOA programs.

2. Cost Allocation

Provide an explanation of how your organization will utilize funds (\$35,964) to carry out the goals of this proposal, including estimated number of hours per staff member, hourly rate for each staff member, number of months staff will focus on this work, and any other associated costs. Work can begin October 14th, 2024 and must conclude by September 30th, 2025.

3. Meeting Deliverables and timeframes

Explain in depth how you intend to meet the deliverables outlined in this RFA.

Format

Applications must use:

- a. Single space;
- b. Times New Roman Font;
- c. Size twelve (12) font;
- d. Maximum of five hundred words (500) per section.

Evaluation and Award

The NWDB will evaluate each eligible applicant’s written proposal based on the criteria of Proposal Narrative mentioned above. Each proposal will be independently evaluated by two or more qualified individuals. Decisions shall be made on or about October 9, 2024.

Scoring Matrix For Proposal	
1. Background of Organization	40
3. Cost Allocation	20
4. Expected Delivery and Timeframe	40
TOTAL EVALUATION POINTS	100

The NWDB reserves the right to reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFA process without obligation or liability to any potential applicant.

A proposal may be deemed “non-responsive” if any of the required information is not provided, and/or the proposal is not received by the stated date and time. The NWDB reserves the right to cancel this RFA at any time, for any reason.