



Request for Proposals for:

**Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership:
American Rescue Plan (ARPA) Good Jobs Challenge**

Job Readiness Training and Career Coaching Provider

RFP Issue Date: January 6, 2023

Response **Due Date:** January 27, 2023



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INVITATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership (based at MAGNET: The Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network) is seeking bids from a qualified consultant or team of consultants to provide program administration, job readiness training, and career coaching for our ACCESS to Manufacturing Careers program. This Job Readiness Training and Career Coaching Provider will support the achievement of outcomes for a federally supported, 36-month initiative called the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Good Jobs Challenge. This project is funded by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) through the ARPA Good Jobs Challenge grant EDA-HDQ-ARPGJ-2021-2006964.

The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership has budgeted \$455,700 for a Job Readiness Training and Career Coaching Provider during the period of performance.

The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership serves as an Industry Sector Partner and subawardee for the Ohio Manufacturers' Association's (System Lead Entity) execution of the Good Jobs Challenge scope of work in system development, program design and program implementation.

SCOPE OF WORK

Under this contract, the vendor will provide program administration (pre-screening, coordination of additional funding supports, data collection, program coordination), job readiness training, and career coaching for our ACCESS to Manufacturing Careers program in support of the Good Jobs Challenge program scope of work (below). The scope of work is designed to ensure that we can accomplish this initiative in the required phased approach, and provide clear strategy and alignment for development, design, and implementation.

Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership Scope of Work

Summary

Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership will expand its ACCESS to Manufacturing Careers program, which is a 4-week program that includes 120 hours of paid training (job readiness skills and technical competencies that are desired by local manufacturers), hands-on learning taught by employer partners, and employer-led activities such as plant tours. ACCESS aligns with the Ohio Manufacturers' Association's evidence-based Entry-Level Learn-and-Earn (ELLE) model designed to help manufacturers with immediate hiring needs recruit, pre-screen, prepare, train prior to employment, onboard, and support entry-level employees with no prior manufacturing experience.



Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership has committed to meeting the following numbers during the 36-month performance period:

- Entry Level Learn and Earn (ELLE) participants: 180
- Upskilling Participants: 100
- Total Participants: 280
- Total Individuals Placed in Jobs: 120

The Job Readiness Training and Career Coaching Provider will play a critical role in enabling the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership to achieve the above goals.

Scope of Work

The Job Readiness Training and Career Coaching Provider will provide the following services for a minimum of four cohorts (~15 students per cohort) annually through June 30, 2025.

- **Program Administration**
 - Pre-screening and acceptance of applicants into each cohort
 - Coordination of additional funding supports
 - Collection and tracking of participant data
 - Regular and timely reporting of participant data to MAGNET
 - Regular and timely reporting of participant progress to community referral partners
 - Program coordination, to include supervision, technology troubleshooting, and ensuring that individuals complete the program.
- **Job Readiness Training:** 50 hours per cohort with the following curriculum:
 - Workplace Skills/Requirements
 - Goal Setting & Personal Career Map
 - Financial Literacy
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Problem Solving
 - Teamwork
 - Time Management
 - Taking Initiative and Motivation
 - Communication
 - Self-Awareness
 - Emotional Intelligence
 - Interviewing Skills
 - Resume Development
- **Career Coaching:** Post-employment support and wraparound services for one-year per participant following program completion
 - Work with 20+ manufacturing employers to ensure participant retention.



Note: Technical training and employer-led activities are not included in this scope of work.

Ohio Manufacturers' Association Scope of Work (for reference)

Summary

OMA will achieve immediate statewide scale and impact by leading industry sector partnerships (ISPs) to engage 1,000+ employers and 6,000 individuals in earn-and-learn and incumbent upskilling programs for high-demand positions resulting in 3,600 job placements. This includes central focus on underserved groups including Appalachian coal communities, people of color, women, veterans, and returning citizens. OMA and its economic development partners within the state government will also replicate the system built by and for manufacturers to strengthen other key industries, most notably broadband and 5G—a vital enabling technology to Industry 4.0 adoption. The scope of work described below reflects the elements in the submitted Project Narrative.

Scope of Work

Project Management

- Fiscal and legal start up tasks. Complete contracting and subaward processes and hiring of all key staff in the first 90 days.
- Data collection to validate estimates: Leveraged from existing projects, the data tracking system AGS Prime will be used by all organizations engaged in this project's ecosystem for data collection, validation, management, and analysis.

System Development

- Employer Change Management. Lead a process to transform the way manufacturers approach recruiting, hiring, and retaining entry-level workers. Launch employer-centered Technical Assistance resources, project management capacity focused on engaging target underserved populations, and a Community of Practice to tackle challenges collectively.
- Emerging Technology Strategy. Convene statewide Emerging Technology Task Force of key industry leaders to identify hiring and skill needs in Industry 4.0-aligned occupations, beginning with Electrical Vehicle manufacturing and Broadband/5G. Task forces will identify hiring and skill needs and create implementation toolkits. OMA and ISPs will align activities and training initiatives around sourcing these needs.

Program Design

- Entry-Level Learn and Earn (ELLE). Customize and deploy Entry-Level Learn and Earn (ELLE) program through each manufacturing sector partnership.
- Entry-Level Upskilling. Deploy upskilling programs to support incumbent worker advancement from entry-level to middle-skill roles; prepare workers for Industry 4.0-aligned careers; and activate new automation and robotics training programs



- developed as a result of OMA's Emerging Technology task force.
- Expanded Communication and Recruitment Capacity: Design enhanced digital marketing; deepened grassroots outreach via partnerships with local organizations that have trusted relationships with the underserved populations; and TA support from state-level Project Managers focused on targeting underserved communities (e.g., assistance with messaging, help identifying CBOs well-positioned for grassroots outreach).
 - Environmentally Sustainable Development: Partner with the National Institute of Manufacturing Standards (NIMS) to produce the industry's first nationally recognized, smart training solution to equip manufacturing employees with sustainable energy skills.

Program Implementation

- ELLE and Upskilling Training Implementation. Partners will recruit and engage 6,000 participants, run ELLE and upskilling programming informed by manufacturers, and offer supportive services for the target populations. As a result, 3,600 individuals will be placed in jobs. (See table below.)
- Affect Perceptions of Manufacturing. Launch dedicated communications and outreach campaign to transform Ohioans' perceptions of manufacturing as a waning industry that is only welcoming to those who are white and male, leading to a generational shift and increasing uptake in manufacturing careers by currently underrepresented populations.
- Recruitment Plans/ Communications: Provide the ISPs with supplemental communication and outreach capacity through coordinated campaigns (web, print, and social media) for use by the backbone organizations and implementation partners.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Inquiries and Information Requests Prior to Submission

The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership will act as the clearinghouse for all inquiries and information requests. All inquiries and information requests must be submitted electronically to Tom McGraw, Director of Sector Partnership, at tmcgraw@manufacturingsuccess.org.

All answers will be electronically distributed to all those who submit questions or requests for additional information. Addendums will also be posted on the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership/MAGNET website with the original RFP. Any other responses to questions, not via Tom McGraw, are considered casual and not binding.



TIMELINE

The tentative schedule for evaluation, selection, and implementation is as follows:

Activity	Date
RFP Released	January 6, 2023
Deadline for Submitting Questions	January 13, 2023
Answers Distributed	January 16, 2023
Proposal Deadline	January 27, 2023
Notification of Award	January 31, 2023
Contract Period	Upon execution of contract through June 30, 2025

Key dates may be altered by the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership; interested parties will be updated via addendum should any alteration occur.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

An entity's failure to submit a complete proposal or to respond in whole to RFP requirements will result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive and thus ineligible for funding. A proposal may also be deemed "non-responsive" if the submitted price is found to be excessive or inadequate as measured by criteria stated in the RFP, or the proposal is clearly not within the scope of the project described and required in the RFP. The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership reserves the right to cancel this procurement at any time, for any reason.

Each bid should be completed entirely, should not exceed 5 pages, and should be typed in font no larger than 12-point font, single-spaced, 1" margins on all sides. Bids should include page numbers and a table of contents. The cover page, table of contents, and attachments will not count against the 5-page limit. Once completed, interested parties must submit their proposal electronically to Tom McGraw at tmcgraw@manufacturingsuccess.org.

1. Late responses may be deemed unresponsive. At its sole discretion, the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership reserves the right to reject any proposal not deemed satisfactory and to waive any and all irregularities in the procedure. Omission, inaccuracy, or misstatement may be sufficient cause for a proposal to be deemed unresponsive and/or irresponsible.



2. There will be no public opening; submittals may be viewed by appointment with the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership.

Please have your proposal organized in the following manner for each component:

- 1) Attachment A: Cover Page
- 2) Project Approach and Methodology
- 3) Organization Experience
 - To include biographies and/or resumes highlighting the qualifications of each team member
- 4) Attachment B: Budget Form & Narrative
- 5) Attachment C: Conflict of Interest
- 6) Attachment D: References

Proposals will clearly and concisely define the processes, skills, and tools to be used toward project requirements. Proposals will demonstrate:

- 1) Minimum of 10 years of experience in providing job readiness training and career coaching. Previous experience with WorkAdvance preferred.
- 2) History of providing job readiness training and career coaching in the manufacturing sector, including developing and maintaining employer relationships.
- 3) Experience with program administration and reporting for a wide range of Federal, State, and County funding streams.
- 4) Demonstrated ability to staff the project within 1 month of selection.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated to ensure each submission meets all criteria outlined in this RFP. The procurement team will develop and use a scoring matrix to evaluate each proposal. Each section of the scoring matrix is worth the following number of points:

Section	Points
Project Approach	40
Organization Experience	40
Budget	10
References	10
TOTAL	100

If necessary, interviews will be scheduled to clarify any concerns or questions.



Evaluation/Selection Committee

All respondents will be notified by the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership via email as to their award status. Unsuccessful respondents who wish to obtain information on the evaluation of their proposal should submit a written request to this effect to Tom McGraw at tmcgraw@manufacturingsuccess.org.

The evaluation committee is as follows:

- Tom McGraw, Director of Sector Partnership, MAGNET
- Aram Nerpouni, Managing Director, Talent, MAGNET
- Lissy Rand, Executive Director of Workforce Partnerships, MAGNET
- Adam Snyder, Chief Operating Officer, Talan Products
- Geoff Lipnevicius, Sr. Manager of Organizational Effectiveness, Lincoln Electric

Contract Award

The contract will be awarded based on the most responsive bidder whose offer is most advantageous to the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership in terms of cost, functionality, and other factors specified in this RFP. The award may be negotiated at the discretion of the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership or made on the basis of the initial bid/offer received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers.

DISCLAIMERS AND DISCLOSURES

Disclaimers

In its sole discretion, the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership may withdraw the RFP either before or after receiving submissions, may accept or reject submissions, and may accept submissions which deviate from the RFP as it deems appropriate and in the grant's best interest. In its sole discretion, the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership may determine the qualifications and acceptability of any party or parties submitting in response to this RFP.

Following submission of a RFP, the respondent agrees to deliver such further details, information and assurances, including financial and disclosure data, relating to the response and/or the respondent, including the respondent's affiliates, officers, directors, shareholders, partners and employees, as requested by the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership

The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership and its advisors shall have no obligation or liability with respect to this RFP, the selection and award process contemplated hereunder, or whether any award or recommendation will be made. All



costs incurred by a respondent in preparing and responding to this RFP are the sole responsibility of the respondent. Any recipient of this RFP who responds hereto, fully acknowledges all the provisions of this disclosure and disclaimer and agrees to be bound by the terms hereof. Any response submitted pursuant to this RFP is at the sole risk and responsibility of the party submitting such response.

Respondents are advised that participation in the design of evaluation strategies might result in exclusion or restriction from participation in other phases.

Accessibility and Equal Opportunity

The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership is committed to equal access for all customers to all services. All contractors must ensure equal opportunity to all individuals. No individual or organization shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex, gender identification, national origin, age, disability, English proficiency, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief. All entities are expected to demonstrate full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) and all other equal opportunity laws. This includes ensuring contract staff receive accessibility training and may involve developing accessibility plans. All respondents must ensure all written materials and communications include the statement: “Reasonable accommodations and auxiliary equipment and services are available upon request.”

Disclosures

All submittals will be available for review by U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and The Ohio Manufacturers’ Association (OMA), the lead grantee for this opportunity, to ensure compliance with all EDA regulations in purchasing equipment. The OMA is governed by the Ohio “Open Records Law” and all responses and supporting data shall be subject to disclosure as required by the law.

Selected vendor, in accepting a Purchase Order or entering into an agreement with the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership, agrees to comply with EDA regulations and cost principles as per the ARPA Good Jobs Challenge grant EDA-HDQ-ARPGJ-2021-2006964.



ATTACHMENT A: COVER SHEET

Please complete this **mandatory** cover sheet accordingly.

Organization Name				
Address				
Phone Number				
Number of Years in Business				
SAM.gov ID / UEI				
EIN				
Acknowledgement that Proposing Entity is up-to-date on taxes and not currently debarred or suspended.			YES	NO
Type of Organization (check all that apply)	Higher Education	Private		
	Community-Based Org.	Business Organization		
	Government Agency	Other (explain)		
	Labor Organization			
	Non-Profit			
Employment Service State Agency (Wagner-Peyser)				
Contact Person's Email Address				
Signatory Authority Signature				



ATTACHMENT B: BUDGET AND NARRATIVE

Please complete the mandatory budget form and narrative explanation below.

Budget Line Item	Cost
Personnel	\$
Travel	\$
Other	\$
TOTAL	\$

Budget Narrative: Please provide a detailed explanation for each budget line item to justify the cost.



ATTACHMENT C: CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM

By submitting a proposal, the authorized signatory authority of the bidding entity certifies to his/her knowledge and belief that there is no conflict of interest (real or apparent) inherent in the bid or in delivering the scope of work if the Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership awards a contract. A conflict of interest would arise if any individual involved in the preparation of this proposal and delivery of services has a financial or other interest or would be likely to gain financially or personally from the award of a contract. The same would hold true for any member of the individual's family, partner, or an organization employing or about to employ any of the above as a direct result of the successful award of a contract under the RFP. The Workforce Connect Manufacturing Sector Partnership reserves the right to disqualify a bidding entity should a conflict of interest be discovered during the solicitation process.

Signatory Authority Name and Title	Signature	Date
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*Note: This form is a **mandatory** required document to be considered for either component. Bidders should only complete this form once per entry.*



ATTACHMENT D: REFERENCES

Bidders are **required** to provide three references who can verify their experience, along with a contact phone number and email address. References should be for experience in the past 5 years.

Name: _____
Title: _____
Organization: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
Title: _____
Organization: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
Title: _____
Organization: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____