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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

WORKER ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE (WAI)

This Request for Proposals (RFP) consists of 12 pages beginning with this one.

Employ Milwaukee, Inc. (EMI) is soliciting quotes from qualified professional firms to supply workforce development services, complying with all terms and conditions described in this document.

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis through October 31, 2025. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted. See *3.2 Submission of the Response*.

1.0 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION OVERVIEW

Project Name: Worker Advancement Initiative (WAI)

RFP Release Date: October 14, 2025, 2025

RFP Due Date: 4:00 PM CST, October 31, 2025

1.1 Definitions

Contractor means each successful respondent awarded a contract.

Agency means the Employ Milwaukee, Inc.

EMI means the Employ Milwaukee, Inc.

Proposer/vendor/respondent means a firm submitting a response to this RFI.

RFI means Request for Information.

Cohort means the size of an occupational skills training or paid work experience proposal must be at least six (6) participants or more.

1.2 Scope of Services Sought

EMI is accepting proposals from partners to implement a State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Worker Advance Initiative (WAI) grant.

WAI will serve people whose previous employment has not come back post-pandemic, as well as those who were not attached to or were not successful in the labor market prior to the pandemic, by offering subsidized employment and skills training opportunities with local employers. Proposals that incorporate the following eligibility and service delivery standards will be considered.

The WAI program is funded using American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA SLRFF).

Employ Milwaukee is an Equal Opportunity employer and service provider. If you need this information or printed material in an alternate format, or in different language, please contact us at (414)-270-1700. Deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired callers can contact us through Wisconsin Relay Service at 7-1-1.

2342 North 27th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53210
Phone: (414) 270-1700
Wisconsin Relay: 7-1-1
employmilwaukee.org

Proposals will be considered based on levels of funding and service delivery as outlined in Section 1.3. Awards are contingent on eligibility and available funding.

The following individuals are eligible to be served through WAI:

- **Unemployed workers** – Individuals, ages 16 and older, who are not currently working. This may include, but is not limited to, individuals currently receiving or who have exhausted Unemployment Insurance benefits.
- **Part-time workers** – Individuals working 32 hours per week or fewer.
- **Underemployed workers** –
 - Individuals working full-time, but earning a wage at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL);
 - Individuals who are not Economically Self-Sufficient at their current wage, as determined through completion of an Economic Self-Sufficiency calculation using CEPT;Or
 - Individuals who are working multiple jobs to have sufficient earnings to maintain their household.
- **Incumbent workers** – Individuals who are currently working full-time (i.e., 32 hours per week or more).
- **Newly employed workers** – Individuals entering new employment, or who have entered new employment within the most recent six-week period.
- **Eligible to work in the United States** –
 - Citizens and nationals of the United States;
 - Lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens, refugees and asylees (who are authorized to work in the U.S. because of their refugee or asylee status); and
 - Other immigrants authorized by the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary's designee to work in the U.S. This includes immigrants covered by Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) who have applied for and received work authorization.

Employ Milwaukee prioritizes targeted outreach and community efforts aimed at enrolling eligible participants with the following targeted population barriers:

- Persons who have been involved in the judicial system (re-entry);
- Non-custodial parents;
- Long-term unemployed (i.e., persons detached from workforce);
- Tribal members, including Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian populations;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Retired individuals;
- Dislocated workers (as defined by WIOA sec. 3(15); 29 U.S.C. 3102(15));
- Racial/ethnic minorities;

- Individuals with Limited English Proficiency;
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers;
- LGBTQ+ persons;
- Individuals who are low-income, as defined in the WIOA Low-Income Guidance;
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient, as defined in the WIOA Basic Skills Deficient Guidance;
- Homeless persons;
- Victims of human trafficking;
- Victims of domestic violence;
- Victims of sexual assault;
- Persons living with, or in recovery from, substance abuse issues;
- Veterans;
- Single parents;
- Persons ages 55 and older;
- Individuals who are in, or have aged out of, foster care.

Eligible Project Activities Include:

- **Job training for participants, including hard or soft skills training.**
 - Adult Education and Literacy
 - Apprenticeship Training
 - Combined Workplace Skills Training & Related Instruction
 - English Language Instruction
 - English Language Learning
 - Financial Literacy Services
 - Integrated Education and Training Programs
 - Occupational Classroom
 - On-the-Job Training
 - Short-term Pre-vocational Services
 - Workforce Preparation
- **Subsidized employment (Paid Work Experience) for unemployed and part-time worker participants.**
- **Wrap-around services, such as, but not limited to, childcare assistance or transportation assistance for participants. Note: These may be provided as stipends or direct payments to providers or participants.**
 - Career Planning
 - Childcare Assistance
 - Comprehensive Individualized or Specialized Assessment
 - Eligibility Determination
 - Group Employment Counseling
 - Housing Assistance
 - IEP Development or Review
 - Individual Employment Counseling
 - Initial Assessment of Interests, Skill Levels & Supportive Service Needs

- Job Development
- Job Readiness Training
- Job Referral/Placement Assistance
- Job Requirements Information
- Job Search Assistance
- Labor Market Information
- Other Support Service Assistance
- Referral
- Resume Development
- Transportation Assistance

- **Incentives for newly employed workers.**

- Incentive/Stipend

- **Advertising or outreach costs to reach participants for the WAI program.**

Qualified respondents will meet the following criteria:

- The applicant has been in operation since at least January 1, 2020.
- The applicant conducts operations and has an administrative presence in Wisconsin.
- The applicant is in compliance with all applicable requirements of the Unemployment Compensation laws, Wis. Stat. ch. 108.
- The applicant is in compliance with all applicable requirements of the Worker's Compensation Act, Wis. Stat. ch. 102.
- The applicant is not listed on the Department of Administration's list of vendors who are not in compliance with Wis. Stat. § 77.66 or the applicant can demonstrate that they have come into compliance since the last posting date of the list. (The list of vendors not in compliance is at: <https://doa.wi.gov/Documents/DEO/CertList.pdf>.)
- *For nonprofit applicants* The applicant is registered as a Wisconsin business or is otherwise in good standing with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. (Status can be checked at: [WI Corporate Records Search](#))
- Since January 1, 2020, the applicant has not been found to have violated the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act, Wis. Stat. § 111.31 et. Seq., or employment regulations under Wis. Stat. ch. 103.
- The applicant is not listed as ineligible on the Department of Administration's Office of Contract Compliance Vendor Directory. (The list of ineligible vendors is at: <https://vendornet.wi.gov/GenProcurement/Certification.aspx>.)
- The applicant is not listed as a delinquent taxpayer with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. (The list of delinquent taxpayers is at: <https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/DelqList/DelqSearch.aspx>.)

1.3 Proposal Options

Proposals for occupational skills trainings or paid work experiences must be for a cohort of at least six (6) or more. Proposals for less than that may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Respondent receives funding to implement complete service delivery model including outreach, recruitment, intake, assessment, enrollment, participant data collection and reporting in Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), Individual Development Plan (IDP) development, stipends, incentives, Employer of Record for paid work experience, and unsubsidized job placement assistance.

Respondent enters into a contractual relationship following all fiscal, programmatic and Equal Opportunity Requirements contained in federal Uniform Guidance. Contractors with awards over \$50,000 may be subjected to annual monitoring by EMI. Proposals requesting \$250,000 or more in funding will be ranked by an internal evaluation committee and funded based on past experience, staff expertise, high demand industry and occupational focus, program design, cost effectiveness, and other relevant criteria.

2.0 ABOUT EMPLOY MILWAUKEE, INC.

It is expected that successful vendors will establish a strong partnership with EMI. As a strong partner, successful vendors will need to become fully acquainted with EMI. EMI is a 501(c) 3, non-profit organization. As the workforce development board for Milwaukee County, EMI is committed to supporting Milwaukee County residents in their search for economic self-sufficiency and supporting local businesses by collaborating with them to create a talent pipeline for a knowledge-based economy. EMI manages a sector-focused education, training and employment system that involves local educators, prospective training operators, area employers, job seekers and employees.

EMI's workforce strategy coordinates labor demand (employer-identified talent and skill needs) and labor supply (individuals with varying levels of education, skills, and barriers to employment) with a goal of connecting people to employment for a lifetime. EMI is at the center of this model, serving as a workforce intermediary that brings together all of the workforce and economic development partners for planning and coordination purposes. EMI's Industry Advisory Boards are employer-driven and deeply committed to providing labor demand expertise in regional growth sectors including manufacturing, construction, hospitality, financial services, and healthcare. Representing labor supply is the EMI Coordinating Council, a formal network of community-based organizations that provide specialized services to address barriers to employment for residents. More information on EMI can be found at www.employmilwaukee.org.

3.0 INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VENDOR

3.1 Communication/Questions

Vendors are expected to raise any questions, or additions they have concerning the RFP document as soon as they become aware of them. Any questions or requests for clarifications must be directed in writing to procurement@employmilwaukee.org. The subject line of the email must be labeled “**RFP WAI PROJECT QUESTION.**” Answers to all questions will be posted on a Frequently Asked Questions page posted on the Skillful Transitions program page at www.employmilwaukee.org.

3.2 Submission of the Response

Mark all documents **RFI WAI SERVICE DELIVERY**. Email all documents to: procurement@employmilwaukee.org
ATTN: CARRIE HERSH, COMPLIANCE MANAGER
EMPLOY MILWAUKEE, INC.
2342 N 27TH STREET
MILWAUKEE WI 53210

Please submit **one (1) digital PDF file**.

3.4 Evaluation Criteria

EMI management will evaluate proposers’ responses to each of the RFI requirements. Priority will be given to proposals that have some or all of the following characteristics, including but not limited to:

- are within high growth, high demand industry sectors and occupations;
- prioritize the recruitment of eligible participants in the targeted populations listed on pgs. 3-4;
- projects that can be operationalized quickly;
- projects that result in a certification, credential, or measurable skills gain; and
- proposers that have previous experience with EMI or the workforce development system service delivery experience.

Proposals should be complete on their face. However, after opening of responses, EMI reserves the right to waive irregularities in any proposal, to request clarifying information it deems appropriate from one or more respondents, to request supplemental information from all of the respondents, and to factor any additional information into the evaluation. EMI may or may not require oral presentations of a group of finalists in person or on the telephone and may request further information from those finalists. All proposals that are deemed qualified will be included on a project management list for use in future projects, contingent upon available funding and agency needs. Respondents will be contacted on a case-by-case basis for consulting work. EMI will not sign a vendor’s forms or contracts. Unless otherwise indicated, awarded vendor will be required to sign EMI’s Professional Services Contract.

4.0 PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

Responses are to be formatted and tabbed in the form and sequence described in Section 4. Responses not following the format outlined may not be considered. The evaluation and selection of a partner/contractor will be based on the information submitted in the response.

Part 1: Signed Cover Page

The EMI cover page (**Attachment I**) must be signed by a vendor representative authorized to make contractual obligations and submitted as Page 1 of the response. Please include all contact information. Failure to include this in your response could result in rejection of the RFI.

Part 2: RFI Response (Excluding Price)

Clearly describe the proposed project including information on the service delivery model, industry and/or occupations served, target populations, leveraged systems/networks/resources, and applicability to mitigating the impact to job seekers and employers related to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Describe your previous experiences managing large scale workforce development projects, especially federal, state, and local initiatives including those funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Describe any project management certifications or credentials. Please submit any past Performance Outcome Metrics for proposals using established training. Examples of Performance Outcome Metrics include # Enrolled, # Entering Training, # Completing Training, # Attaining a Certificate of Completion, Credential or College Credits, # Exited, Demographics Served, etc. Explain your knowledge and understanding of EMI and the public workforce system. Please use size 12 Calibri font with 1" borders and limit response to no more than 3 pages.

Part 3: RFI Response Cost Proposal

Please submit a budget narrative detailing the costs of the project. No template is provided.

Part 4: Designation of Information as "Confidential" or "Proprietary"

You may fill out and submit the attached "Request to Designate Information as Confidential or Proprietary" form (**Attachment II**) if you seek to designate any portion of your response as confidential or proprietary. Please note that the Board is bound by the Wisconsin Public Records Law, and as such, all of the terms of this Contract are subject to and conditioned on the provisions of Wis. Stat. § 19.21, *et seq.*

Part 5: Additional Materials, Brochures, Data, Etc.

Please only include relevant and necessary information.

Part 6: Due Diligence Form (Attachment III)

Part I
Attachment I: Signed Cover Page

I have read the terms and conditions of this RFI and submit for consideration the attached proposal and exhibits, if any.

The fees and costs in this proposal have been arrived at independently, and have not been divulged, discussed, or compared with the proposals of other respondents. No attempt has been made nor will be made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition.

Response Type: (Refer to Options I, II, III, IV, or V as outlined on Page of RFP.)

Organization/Business Name:

Telephone Number:

Address:

Website, if applicable:

City, State, Zip Code:

Email Address:

Authorized Signer's Full Name and Title:

Authorized Signature and Date:

Federal Tax ID Number:

Part 4: Designation of Information as “Confidential” or “Proprietary”

Attachment II

The attached material submitted in response to the WAI RFP includes proprietary and confidential information which qualifies as a trade secret, as provided in s. 19.36(5), Wis. Statutes., or is otherwise material that can be kept confidential under the Wisconsin Open Records Law. As such, we ask that certain pages, as indicated below, of this bid/proposal response be treated as confidential material and not be released without our written approval.

Prices always become public information when a contract is awarded and executed, and therefore cannot be kept confidential.

Other information cannot be kept confidential unless it is a trade secret. Trade secret is defined in s. 134.90(1)(c), Wis. Statutes as follows: “Trade secret” means information, including a formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique, or process to which all of the following apply:

1. The information derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.
2. The information is the subject of efforts to maintain its secrecy that are reasonable under the circumstances.

We request that the following pages not be released:

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page #</u>	<u>Topic</u>

In the event the designation of confidentiality of this information is challenged, the undersigned hereby agrees to provide legal counsel or other necessary assistance to defend the designation of confidentiality or proprietary, and agrees to hold Employ Milwaukee, Inc. (EMI) harmless for any costs or damages arising out of EMI agreeing to withhold the materials.

Failure to include this form in the bid/proposal response may mean that all information provided as part of the bid/proposal response will be open to examination and copying. EMI considers other markings of confidential or proprietary in the bid/proposal document to be insufficient. The undersigned agrees to hold EMI harmless for any damages arising out of the release of any materials unless they are specifically identified above.

Company Name: _____

Signature of Authorized Representative: _____

Name and Title of Authorized Representative:- _____

Date: _____

Part 5: Additional Materials, Brochures, Data, Etc.

This is optional and please only include relevant and necessary information as attachments.



Part 6: Due Diligence

Attachment III: Due Diligence Check List

All Designated Applicants are required to complete the Risk Assessment Form and Due Diligence checklist. Applicants are strongly encouraged to verify that there are no unresolved issues in these areas prior to submitting the application. Applicant may be automatically disqualified and will not be scored if any of the statements below apply to the Applicant:

Applicant Name: _____

	Yes	No
Within the last 24 months, the Applicant has been required to provide a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice under 29 U.S.C. § 2101 et seq., or a Wisconsin's Business Closing and Mass Layoff Law, Wis. Stat. § 109.07, listed on the Layoff Notices found here: https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dislocatedworker/warn/	☐	☐
The Applicant has been found to violate the Unemployment Compensation laws, Wis. Stat. Ch. 108, within the last 24 months.	☐	☐
The Applicant has been found to violate the Worker's Compensation Act, Wis. Stat. ch. 102, within the last 24 months.	☐	☐
The Applicant is on the Wisconsin Department of Administration's list of vendors that are not in compliance with Wis. Stat. § 77.66, found at http://vendornet.state.wi.us/vendornet/wocc/CertList.pdf , and has not come into compliance since the last posting date of the list.	☐	☐
If the Applicant is a Wisconsin corporation, it is not registered or is not in good standing with Wisconsin DFI, as listed here: WI Corporate Records Search	☐	☐
Within the last 24 months, the Applicant has been found to have violated the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act, Wis. Stat. § 111.31 et seq., or employment laws under Wis. Stat. ch. 103.	☐	☐
The Applicant is listed as ineligible on the Department of Administration's Office of Contract Compliance Vendor Directory, found here: VendorNet Information Center	☐	☐
The Applicant is listed as a delinquent taxpayer with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue found here: https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/DelqList/DelqSearch.aspx	☐	☐
The Applicant been in operation less than 24 months	☐	☐

If the Applicant answered "yes" to any of the above, please provide a detailed explanation of the reasons why the answer is not "no."

Printed Name of Applicant Representative

Applicant Signature

Date