# **Workforce Career and Education Outreach Specialist Pilot Program**

# **Discussion Paper**

**Background**

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) approved a new 2-year initiative in July 2018 totaling $4,000,000 called “Workforce Career & Technical Education Outreach Specialist Pilot Program” to ensure students get the exposure and awareness to career resources today that empower them to gain degree certifications, graduate with marketable skills, and minimize student debt in the future. An RFA was issued in November to implement this pilot program that places local Workforce Career Specialists in area middle and high schools (grades 6-12) to provide career guidance and workforce information to students regarding 1) high growth, high demand occupations; 2) opportunities and training in middle-skills jobs; 3) apprenticeship training programs; 4) internships; and 5) community and technical colleges. Local Boards are the eligible applicants, and projects are to be funded over two years. Six applications were approved for funding in March and grants are being developed for award in early May. Until awards are made, the initiative remains an open procurement subject to the restrictions of a competitive solicitation process.

**Issue**

The Agency received 16 applications from Boards, and all received evaluation scores in a competitive range. In the first year, these grants will employ 23 Workforce Career Specialists housed in 63 Independent School Districts (ISD), and it is estimated that these grants will engage over 147,000 students through over 2,900 workshops.

As noted, Boards submitted high quality, competitive applications totaling $8,918,130. A considerable amount of pre-work was required by Boards to apply for these funds, including applicants securing approval for workspace within schools as part of their application. Given the quality and need for these specialists as evidenced by volume of applications, additional grant awards will double the number of Workforce Career Specialists, and almost triple the ISD coverage with 46 Workforce Career Specialists in 172 ISDs with a reach of over 394,968 students through over 3,976 workshops.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Additional Applicants** | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| No. | Average | Requested Year 1 Funds | Contract Cumulative | Cumulative Total | # of FTEs | # of ISDs | # of Students Engaged | # of Workshops |
| 7 | 85 | $397,136 | $794,272 | $5,169,220 | 3 | 5 | 144,168 | 32 |
| 8 | 82.67 | $226,325 | $452,650 | $5,621,870 | 2 | 60 | 7,500 | 120 |
| 9 | 81.33 | $180,257 | $360,514 | $5,982,384 | 2 | 3 | 15,000 | 48 |
| 10 | 81.33 | $356,458 | $712,916 | $6,695,300 | 4 | 7 | 13,250 | 50 |
| 11 | 81 | $343,078 | $686,156 | $7,381,456 | 3 | 8 | 10,423 | 563 |
| 12 | 81 | $156,922 | $313,844 | $7,695,300 | 2 | 11 | 3,500 | 144 |
| 13 | 79.67 | $228,175 | $456,350 | $8,151,650 | 3 | 5 | 3,460 | 72 |
| 14 | 77.33 | $383,240 | $766,480 | $8,918,130 | 4 | 10 | 50,000 | 40 |
| Totals |  |  |  |  | 23 | 109 | 247,301 | 1069 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Awarded Applicants** | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| No. | Average | Requested Year 1 Funds | Contract Cumulative | Cumulative Total | # of FTEs | # of ISDs | # of Students Engaged | # of Workshops |
| 1 | 90.67 | $400,000 | $800,000 | $800,000 | 5 | 5 | 18,000 | 160 |
| 2 | 90 | $395,005 | $790,010 | $1,590,010 | 2 | 4 | 4,000 | 20 |
| 3 | 89.67 | $293,866 | $587,732 | $2,177,742 | 3 | 3 | 25,000 | 55 |
| 4 | 86.33 | $400,000 | $800,000 | $2,977,742 | 5 | 19 | 5,500 | 2,000 |
| 5 | 85.67 | $339,354 | $678,708 | $3,656,450 | 5 | 17 | 90,167 | 600 |
| 6 | 85.33 | $359,249 | $718,498 | $4,374,948 | 3 | 15 | 5,000 | 72 |
| Totals |  |  |  |  | 23 | 63 | 147,667 | 2907 |
| Grand Totals |  |  |  |  | 46 | 172 | 394,968 | 3976 |

A key component of the program includes training for the Workforce Specialists by TWC’s Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) team. The training will cover all TWC’s online labor market tools including Texas Reality Check, Apprenticeship Challenge, and is scheduled for July 8-10, 2019 at TWC. If timely awarded, additional grantees may have an opportunity to attend this training in time for the 2019-2020 school year.

The TANF reserve balance is currently at $815,229 as of April 15, 2019.

**Recommendation**

Staff seeks Commission direction and approval to expand funding for the award of additional Workforce Career and Education Specialist applicants using TANF statewide reserve funds.