

Request for Qualifications – PA Youth in Transition (PAYT)

OVERVIEW

The Delaware County Workforce Investment Board (DCWIB) and its Youth Council were awarded a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to address the needs of the young people in the County who have dropped out of high school and/or are aging out of the foster care system through an asset-mapping project. This is an opportunity to create a real-world, project-based learning opportunity for youth participants, while at the same time gathering key information related to their needs. The project has been purposefully designed to identify local resources and options for young people from the target populations and to re-engage them with educational and work opportunities.

In addition to providing a valuable learning experience for the participating youth, this project has also been structured to provide a capacity-building opportunity for your organization. By participating in the project, staff will learn how to design and implement project-based learning experiences, which research indicates are the most engaging and effective for developing training programs for young people. Staff will also learn the asset-mapping process and how to use web-based technologies and multimedia. These skills can easily be applied to other projects within your organization. Finally, staff will receive valuable tools and resources, including a Guide to Creating Project-based Learning that they will be able to refer to and utilize as they develop other training programs for your organization.

The purpose of this Request for Qualifications is to identify 3-4 educational, nonprofit or community organizations who are based in Delaware County that are interested in participating in the project as described below.

To assist the successful organizations with achieving the project's objectives, The Widing Group, a consulting firm with more than 16 years of experience in providing workforce training and program development, will work with you on this unique training opportunity that will benefit young people from the target population and provide the

County with important information on the programs and services available to serve these disconnected youth.

PROJECT GOALS

As stated above, the major goals of the PAYT grant project are to:

- Identify local resources available to serve young people who have dropped out of high school and/or who are aging out of foster care.
- Identify strategies for re-engaging these young people with the educational and work opportunities available in the region.
- Facilitate conversations among the various stakeholders in the area about ways to address the needs and concerns of young high school dropouts and youth aging out of foster care.

To achieve these objectives, Delaware County has designed a project model based on one of the strongest best practices for serving youth—seeing young people as community assets and engaging their strengths in serving the community. In this model, we will be working with 3-4 youth-serving nonprofit organizations in Delaware County and 8-12 young people designated by these agencies to participate. Each agency will identify 1 staff person and 2-3 young people. These individuals will form a project team within their own organization that will develop an asset map of all of the resources available in Delaware County to address the needs of the project’s targeted youth population.

The youth from all of the participating organizations will come together to present on the results of each team’s work at a one-day Youth Exposition and Forum, to which education and other stakeholders will be invited. During this forum, the DCWIB’s Youth Council will also facilitate a discussion with youth and the youth provider community on the implications of the asset map in terms of gaps in services, as well as use the opportunity to gather information on other issues impacting our ability to adequately serve these young people.

Benefits to Participation

This project has been designed to benefit both the organizations that participate and the young people they designate. Benefits include:

- **Training for your designated staff person** in conducting an asset-mapping project and in developing and implementing a project-based learning curriculum with young people.
- **The asset-mapping curriculum, all associated tools and a Train-the-Trainer Guide** for use in developing other youth training projects.
- **Training in asset-mapping and technology use for the youth designated to participate in the project.** They will also learn how to prepare and present their findings to a variety of stakeholder groups.
- **\$2000 stipend for each staff participant** to be paid to the sponsoring organization.
- **\$1,000 stipend for each youth participant** to be paid to the sponsoring organization for issuing to the youth.
- **\$3,000 of equipment**, including one laptop computer, one digital video recorder, one microphone, one digital camera and one digital audio recorder. This equipment will be used as part of the project and will be retained by the organization at the conclusion of the project.

PROGRAM DESIGN FRAMEWORK

This project consists of two major components:

- The *development of an asset map* to identify the resources and gaps in service in the County for young people who have dropped out of high school and youth aging out of foster care.
- *A presentation of the asset map and research findings at a Youth Exposition and Forum* for stakeholders from schools, community organizations, government agencies, young people and their families.

To carry out this work, an organizational project team consisting of 1 staff person and 2-3 youth from the target populations will be convened from up to 4 youth-serving organizations as described above. Together, these organizations will comprise the PAYT project team, which will be facilitated by an experienced instructor that will provide the

training and support necessary to complete the asset-mapping process and present findings at the Youth Exposition and Forum.

As part of the project, staff will also receive training in how to implement a project-based training curriculum and in how to facilitate an asset-mapping project with youth. In addition, the youth involved will receive training in asset-mapping, technology (including several web-based technologies such as wikis and Google maps), conducting focus groups and interviews, and developing and making presentations.

The project will kick-off in December 2007. Project staff will participate in an orientation that introduces project resources and participate in training on how to implement an asset-mapping project. Beginning in January 2008 and continuing through late March/early April, staff and young people will work together to complete the research and asset-mapping project and document their findings.

These findings will be presented at the Youth Exposition and Forum to take place in late April/early May. The exact time commitment for completing the project will be determined when the team develops its initial work plan.

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

To participate in the project, each organization will fulfill the following roles and responsibilities:

- Identify one (1) youth services staff person to participate in the project. Staff person must have experience in providing direct services to target youth and should be in a position to benefit from training in project-based learning, technology tools and asset-mapping.
- Identify and recruit 2-3 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are high school dropouts and/or aging out of foster care to participate in the project. Participating youth should possess sufficient literacy skills to utilize web-based technology tools, conduct basic research (with assistance) and document their findings (again, with assistance).

- Ensure that participating staff and young people attend all scheduled meetings and training sessions, including asset-mapping activities and the Youth Exposition and Forum.
- With the training contractor, provide support and facilitation for the youth in implementing the asset-mapping project and participating in the Youth Exposition and Forum.
- Ensure that staff and youth utilize the technology tools included in the project in order to effectively document learning and share information.
- Ensure that staff and youth participate in completing the objectives of the project, including developing the asset map and presenting at the Youth Forum.
- Work with the training contractor to document the process and provide any necessary information and resources to complete evaluation and other reports required by the State as part of implementing the PA Youth in Transition grant.
- Provide access to Internet-enabled computers that staff and students may use to complete documentation of asset-mapping project. *Note that each participating organization will be provided with a laptop for the project.*
- If, for some reason, the staff person and/or youth participant(s) are unable or unwilling to fulfill their roles and responsibilities in completing this project, the organization will provide an appropriate replacement(s).

PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO THIS RFQ

If you think that you might be interested in submitting a proposal in response to this RFQ, we are asking you to email us your name, organization and preferred email address to DCWIB@widinggroup.com with the subject heading "PAYT Intent to Respond" so that we may send additional information in lieu of a bidder's conference. Giving us notice is not a requirement for submitting a proposal, nor does submitting this information require you to submit a proposal.

If you have any questions, please submit them in writing by email at any time but no later than C.O.B. Monday, November 19th. We will email all questions and answers to all organizations that submit their intent to respond.

For the proposal, please submit a brief (maximum of 3 pages) proposal that specifically includes the following information:

1. Name, Address, Phone and Email of Applicant Organization
2. Name/Title of Key Contact at the Organization
3. Description of past experience in working with targeted youth population(s)
4. Description of programs you are presently operating for the target population.
5. Description of any past experiences with project-based training and/or conducting an asset-mapping project.
6. Name/Title and Qualifications of the staff member you are proposing for participation in the project.
7. Description of how you will identify students to participate in the project and how you will support them in ensuring that they participate in the asset-mapping process and presentation at the Youth Exposition and Forum.
8. Description of the process you will use to ensure staff and youth participation in the project and how you will address failures to participate by both staff and young people.
9. Description of any resources you will provide to supplement the project, i.e., computer lab, meeting space, etc.

Please submit the proposals to The Widing Group no later than **Wednesday, November 21, 2007 at 12 noon**. Email is strongly preferred; however, proposals submitted by mail will also be accepted.

The Widing Group
DCWIB@widinggroup.com
936 N. 5th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Applications will be reviewed by the Delaware County WIB's Youth Council and successful applicants will be notified by Wednesday, November 28, 2007.