

FY27 WIOA Youth RFP



BERKSHIRE
WORKFORCE BOARD

FY27 WIOA Youth RFP

Issue Date	Friday, February 28, 2025
Bidders Conference	Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. via ZOOM
Deadline for Proposal Questions	Friday, April 24, 2026
Application Submission Deadline	Friday, May 1, 2026 by 12:00 p.m.

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- The BWB is seeking proposals from interested parties to provide community system building services to disadvantaged in-school youth ages 14-21 and out-of-school youth ages 16-24 under the federal Workforce Innovations & Opportunities Act (WIOA);
- These funds are meant to be used to expand or create an infrastructure that will coordinate access to and the use of existing resources and services and should not be used to augment or supplant funding for services that currently exist;
- Successful bidders will partner with Berkshire Training & Employment Inc. (BTE), the entity that operates MassHire Berkshire Career Center, who will provide framework and follow-up services;
- *WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy;*
 - *serves as one of many workforce development initiatives in addressing the region's population decline, widening skills gap and low youth employment rate*

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WIOA emphasizes servicing youth within a year-round comprehensive workforce development system that is outcome based and is built on services around a set of fourteen required program elements – **ATTACHMENT A (pgs 22-24); required to make these available through vendor or partners**

14 REQUIRED YOUTH ELEMENTS

Tutoring, Study Skills & Dropout Prevention Services

Alternative Secondary Education

Paid / Unpaid Work Experiences

Occupational Skills Training

Leadership Development

Support Services

Adult Mentoring

Follow-up Services (12 months)

Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling

Career Pathway Programming (Integrated industry/occupational education and training)

Financial Literacy Education

Entrepreneurial Skills Training

Services that provide Labor Market Information

Post Secondary preparation and transition

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WIOA Youth Eligibility Criteria – ATTACHMENT B (pgs 25-29)

To be eligible to participate in WIOA youth programming, an individual must be an Out-of-School Youth ages 16-24 or an In-School Youth ages 14-21. BTE will assist with eligibility.

Out-Of-School Youth Eligibility Criteria:

- Not attending any school (as defined under State law);
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment;

- Have one or more of the following WIOA barriers:
 - A school dropout;
 - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
 - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is **a low-income individual** (including youth residing in a high poverty area) and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner;
 - An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
 - A homeless individual, a runaway, an individual who is in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act, or an individual who is in an out-of-home placement;
 - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
 - An individual with a disability
 - A **low-income individual** who **requires additional assistance** to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment (**Locally approved** – low MCAS scores, substance dependent, receiving mental health services, at-risk/gang affiliated)

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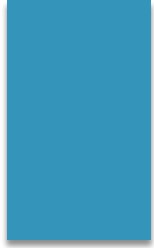
In-School Youth Eligibility Criteria:

- Attending school;
- Not younger than 14 or older than 21 at the time of enrollment;
- Be low income (includes eligible youth under the National School Lunch Act & youth who reside in a high poverty area);
**youth attending a designated low-income school do not automatically qualify*

- Have one or more of the following WIOA barriers:
 - Basic skills deficient;
 - An English language learner;
 - An offender;
 - A homeless youth or a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system;
 - Pregnant or parenting;
 - A youth who is an individual with a disability;
 - An individual who **requires additional assistance** to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment (**Locally approved** – low MCAS scores, substance dependent, receiving mental health services, at-risk/gang affiliated)

*In accordance with WIOA Sec. 129 (a)(3)(B), not more than 5 percent of the region's in-school youth may be an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure or hold employment

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Performance Measure	Measure Detail - Positive Outcome
In Employment or Post Secondary Education or Training in the 2nd Quarter After Exit	Percentage of youth who are in education or training or entered employment during 2nd Quarter after exit. All exiters are measured
In Employment or Post Secondary Education or Training in the 4th Quarter After Exit	Percentage of youth who are in education or training or entered employment during 4th Quarter after exit All exiters are measured
Median Wages 2nd Quarter After Exit	Median wages of those in employment during 2nd Quarter after exit
Credential Attainment **	Percentage of youth who obtain a post-secondary credential, license or certificate during program or within 1 year of exit <u>OR</u> Percentage of youth who obtain diploma/equivalency AND have obtained or retained a job OR are in an education or training program that leads to a post-secondary credential within 1 year of exit
Measureable Skill Gain	Percentage of youth who are in an education or training program that leads to a credential or employment and who are achieving "measurable skills gains" Meeting one or more "Measurable skill gains" include: 1.) Attainment of a high school diploma 2.) Achievement of an educational function level 3.) Transcript / Report Card achievement 4.) Achievement of a milestone (completion of OJT, apprenticeship program, any training achievement) 5.) Achievement of a trade-related benchmark /skill progression (knowledge-based exams)
Employer Retention Measure	Percentage of youth employed with the same employer in the 2 nd and 4 th quarters after exit.

**** a youth who has received a high school diploma or HiSet while enrolled in WIOA must be enrolled in post-secondary education or employed within the first year after program exit.**

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Additional RFP Information & Guidance

- 1.) WIOA programming is not a separate summer program nor is it meant to only provide work-based-learning / paid work experiences. Funding is made available for a single, year-round delivery of comprehensive services based around the Required 14 Elements;
- 2.) Awards will be competitive, based on expected outcomes, cost per participant, quality of the program design, demonstrated past performance, and understanding of the target population;

- 3.) Components of effective WIOA Youth Programs Include:

Individualized Service Strategy (ISS) (Attachment E pgs 37-41)

Dropout prevention, intervention & recovery activities

Post-Secondary preparation

Linkages & integration of academic and career readiness activities

Partnerships with educational and business partners to develop or connect youth to Career Pathway opportunities (page 7)

Opportunities for youth to become knowledgeable on regional labor market needs & required skills

Occupational education linked to local industry needs

Internships & structured work experiences

Effective connections to employers (esp critical industry sectors)

Evidence of or development of a coordinated information and referral system of available services for youth

Involvement of parents/family members, former youth participants, and other members of the community

Monthly tracking and reporting system for each enrolled youth detailing services and outcomes (Attachment C pg 35)

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- 4.) **Emphasis on out-of-school youth.** Based on federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidelines, **no less than 75% of WIOA funding allocated to the region will be used to serve out-of-school youth** during this funding cycle;
- 5.) Berkshire Training & Employment, Inc. will Provide Framework and Follow-up Services - **youth intake/eligibility determination and assistance with follow-up services (attachment A) for enrolled youth; *Vendors required to report monthly to BTE!***
- 6.) WIOA Youth Program vendors **must make all 14 Required Elements available** to their youth participants for the duration of the contract;
- 7.) Priority will be given to proposals that focus on **emerging and growing industries in Berkshire County and regional labor market and economic needs** through the provision of career readiness activities and career pathway models to enrolled WIOA youth <https://masshireberkshire.com/>
- 8.) **Subsidized structured work experiences or internships under WIOA are limited to a maximum of 300 hours at an hourly rate of \$15.00**

****Under WIOA, any in-school or out-of-school youth who is receiving subsidized funds to support their work experience must be income eligible and have an additional barrier.**

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Work experiences:

- See ATTACHMENT D (page 36) for a list of worksite expectations & guidelines;
- Worksites should provide quality and safe working and learning opportunities, governed by the Massachusetts Work Based Learning Plan (please visit <http://www.skillslibrary.com/wbl.htm> for more information)
- Wages to youth in subsidized work experiences will be paid through Berkshire Training & Employment Inc. (BTE).
- WIOA section 129(c)(4) prioritizes work experiences with the requirement that local areas must spend a minimum of 20 percent of non-administrative local area funds on work experience.

Allowable expenditures can include staff time spent on the following (in addition to total wages to youth):

- identifying potential work experience opportunities;
- working with employers to develop successful work experiences;
- evaluating the work experiences;
- developing and implementing participant work experience orientation sessions, classroom training or the required academic education component directly related to the work experience, as well as orientation for employers

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Local Roles Under WIOA

The MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board (BWB)

- Provides *regional policy and oversight for all WIOA activities* (youth, veterans, dislocated workers);
- *BWB Youth Council oversees all workforce development youth programming, issues annual WIOA youth RFP, selects annual WIOA youth providers, coordinates all career readiness youth programming and conducts oversight and evaluations of programs (WIOA & non-WIOA)*

Berkshire Training & Employment Inc. (BTE)

- *Operates MassHire Berkshire Career Center, and serves as the Grant Recipient and Administrative Agency for all WIOA funds flowing to Berkshire County*
- *Oversees all contracting and fund management responsibilities, ensuring that BWB policies are implemented through programs meeting administrative and financial regulations*

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- Assistance with **youth outreach and recruitment** services;
- Provides official **WIOA eligibility determination** of all targeted youth; (Attachment B1 - required eligibility documentation)
- Performs a required series of **individual assessments** for each youth participant – educational needs, career interests/skills, aptitudes, etc. Results along with strategies, goals and support services are indicated and updated within each participant's **ISS** (Attachment E)
- Assistance with youth referrals;
- Maintains all eligibility youth performance outcomes within the MOSES database -**All WIOA youth program vendors must adhere to the form, content, and reporting of MOSES data to BTE throughout the program duration.** (Attachment C)
- Assist program vendors with the **provision of the 14 Required Youth Elements** as needed, **including required follow-up services** (Attachment A)



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Eligible Applicants - *qualified educational and training institutions who have demonstrated successful performance in serving disadvantaged youth including*

Public School Systems
Community-Based Organizations
Public / Private Agencies
Community or State Colleges
Labor Groups
Career Centers
Governmental Units
Employers
Proprietary Schools

*Proposals that demonstrate **sustainable partnerships** between employers, youth serving agencies, school districts and workforce/economic development partners are encouraged*

Facilities providing services should be accessible to persons with disabilities, and must operate in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as other applicable Federal and State Laws

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Applicants may subcontract with sub-groups(s) to provide the specific services they propose to offer in their overall proposal. All subcontracting arrangements **must be articulated in detail in the proposal and be included as a separate line item in the budget**

Funding Source - Programs through this RFP will be funded through the **FY2027 WIOA Youth** allocation for the **Berkshire Workforce Investment Area** from the **U.S. Department of Labor**

FY26 Funding Breakdown (21.6% reduction from FY25)

\$209,220 – direct WIOA youth program support

Up to (max 25%) for ISY - \$52,305

No less than (min 75%) for OSY - \$156,915

On behalf of the BWB, BTE, as the designated fiscal agent for regional WIOA funds, will execute all contracts with selected FY2027 WIOA youth program vendors.

Bidders must provide documentation of cash and/or in-kind matching resources to leverage the WIOA funds

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PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, REVIEW, AND SELECTION

An electronic copy of your proposal on a USB device along with an original and eight (8) copies of completed proposal(s) are due at the Berkshire Workforce Board, 75 South Church Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 no later than 12:00 noon on Friday, May 1, 2026 to be considered for funding. All proposals become property of the BWB. Please contact Heather Williams at youthdirector@masshireberkshire.com to make arrangements to drop off your application package.

Facsimiles and emailed versions will NOT be accepted

Additional questions must be submitted in writing to the BWB by Friday, April 24, 2026 and answers will be available on the BWB website <https://masshireberkshire.com/> within 24 hours of the questions being received

Complete proposals received by the submission deadline will be reviewed by the BWB's Youth Council Proposal Review Committee and award recommendations will be forwarded onto the BWB's Full Board of Directors. The review process will be completed by June 4, 2026. Successful applicants will be notified by June 8, 2026 and contract negotiations will commence immediately with Berkshire Training & Employment Inc. (Cost-reimbursement contract)

Contract Duration: July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028. Covers year delivery of WIOA program services to youth from July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 and the required follow-up period from July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028. Proposals should reflect all costs, including total wages paid to youth and program outcomes within the WIOA program delivery period beginning July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

BWB and Bidder's Rights/Appeal Procedures – outlined on page 13



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WORKFORCE BOARD**

FY27 WIOA Youth RFP – Proposal Components

Application Package

- **Cover Page** – Contact Info, Proposal Checklist, Signature (page 15)
- **Narrative Components** - limited to **no more than 12 pages** of single-sided, double spaced, typewritten, material with pagination (page #'s), using 12 point with one-inch margins, (pages 16-21)

Do not assume the reviewers know your program! Please thoroughly describe and provide information for all the proposal narrative components.

Attachments

Attachment A: WIOA Required 14 Program Elements (pages 22-24; page 23 #8 outlines follow-up support)

Attachment B: WIOA Youth Eligibility Criteria (pages 25-29)

Attachment B1: WIOA Youth Eligibility Documentation (pages 30-34)

Attachment C: Required Vendor Monthly Reporting Form (page 35)

Attachment D: Work Experience Guidelines (page 36)

Attachment E: Individualized Service Strategy (ISS) (pages 37-41)

Attachment F: Budget Summary & Narrative (to be completed and submitted with proposal) (pages 42 & 43)

Attachment G: Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters
(to be completed and submitted with proposal) (page 44)

Submit copy of your organizations most recent audit (1 copy)