

Question: Between vendors and partners, do we have to meet every single one of the bullets listed in the 14 Required Elements? (Attachment A)

Answer: They are suggestions of what can be provided through those elements. It doesn't necessarily mean that every single bullet needs to be met, but it's more of a guideline of what can be provided to the youth. You have to be able to have them available in the event someone needs that service.

Question: Not every single youth will need all of the 14 Required Elements?

Answer: No. The Career Center is OSY and does HiSET and GED – immediately they are doing multiple elements. Then after that, different elements are provided, including a paid job.

Note: Example – occupational skills: a certificate that leads to certification or a specific occupation. Can be provided in-house if you have those at your agency, or through a partner.

Question: Is there a large focus on paid and unpaid work experience under WIOA?

Answer: Paid and unpaid work experience are an additional service under WIOA. Subsidized internships are provided through the programming for income-eligible youth. General work experience is included as a Required Youth Element.

Question: Clarifying point – even though we're offering all the services, we're going to come across times when all the youth aren't going to be using the services. As long as we make all the things available, if students aren't accessing the services, it's okay to have them available?

Answer: Yes. In your application you will demonstrate how you will make all of the Required Youth Elements available.

Question: When you say Out-of-School youth, what does this mean?

Answer: They must no longer be enrolled in school. The goal would be to get their HS credential and enter the workforce and/or post-secondary education.

Note: If you have students that you know have been chronically absent and they aren't going to make it, they are great candidates for OSY – but they have to prove that they are no longer attending school. They have to be 16+ to drop out for WIOA eligibility.

Question: Clarification on the numbers for the average award to each applicant?

Answer: We only received one application last year, from MassHire Berkshire Career Center (BTE), so they received the full amount of funding. They are providing services to 30 youth.

Note: In years past, when we've had an in-school vendor, they've served, on average, around 5 youth. It depends on what vendors are asking for, and the Youth Council selects vendors and slots as equitably as possible.

Question: So still talking about a finite amount of funds – can we expect less than last year, and the amount is divided between all applicants, and 75% has to go to OSY?

Answer: Yes. It would be split, with 25% going to ISY vendors.

Question: Can an organization apply to work with both in-school & out-of-school youth?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there a requirement for how many youth need to be served?

Answer: No. Numbers served are typically under 10 in-school youth given up to 25% of the WIOA youth allocation is allocated to in-school programming and a minimum of 75% is allocated toward out-of-school youth programming.

Question: Can organizations sub-contract / work together to make sure services are not duplicated?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is this cost reimbursement-based?

Answer: Yes. The wages to the youth are still part of the vendor's total award, but wages will remain at BTE as they conduct payroll and liability coverage.

Question: How much can be allocated for student wages?

Answer: It depends on how many youth served \times minimum wage \times 300 hours.

Question: As a school district, could we apply for OSY programming as long as follow-up is there?

Answer: Yes – as long as they are OSY and not enrolled in the district.

Question: Where in the budget can we build in staff costs for follow-up?

Answer: All follow-up costs must be built into the program delivery costs during the first year of the contract.

Question: During the follow-up period, do we provide monthly updates to BTE for any youth enrolled?

Answer: Yes – the monthly follow-up tool will be used. It's a best practice rather than just contacting someone at the agency.

Question: If applying for both, who could be a subcontractor for OSY?

Answer: If you want the Career Center to be a subcontractor in serving OSY, that must be articulated in the application.

Note: Example – MCLA provided ABE and WIOA services and partnered with the Career Center as a subcontractor for OSY. Another example – BTE applied as OSY vendor and subcontracted with another entity.

Question: If a vendor provides financial literacy, do they need to be a subcontractor?

Answer: No.

Note: You need to determine how services are provided and distinguish between subcontractors' vs partners providing the Required 14 Elements. Example – Greylock Federal is a partner providing Financial Literacy (Required Element).

Question: Maintaining contact with youth after exit can be difficult. Any advice?

Answer: One best practice involves allocating WIOA funds in your program to provide incentives for follow-up services.

Note: The Career Center builds supportive services and incentives tied to outcomes. That has helped with follow-up. They also use creative outreach methods (like Google Voice). Schools may have more restrictions. The Berkshire Workforce Board helps support these efforts with additional funding where possible.

Question: Will the recording from the Bidders Conference be available?

Answer: Yes. It is posted on the MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board website:

<https://masshireberkshire.com/youth/youth-programs/>

Questions received after Bidders Conference on 3/17:

1.Q2, page 4 on the application: Please fully describe how your program will provide the following WIOA required components to youth participants:

a. Alternative Education

b. Post-Secondary Education & Training (Out-of-School Youth)

If we are targeting In-School Youth, does this question NOT need to be answered? *You can address this by highlighting your partnerships with the Career Center, Berkshire Community College and additional partnerships that can be on hand to offer these services should your youth need access to them.*

2. You suggested we reach out to MassHire Connecting Activities program for additional funding to support this work that can be “braided” with WIOA funds to fill gaps. How does this work exactly? Should we do that now, before submitting the application? *Connecting Activities funding is provided to the school districts to ensure a career readiness system / scope and sequence is in place for all students. With this funding, Career Readiness Coordinators have been established in the high schools and College & Career Teams established in each district to ensure students are participating in career awareness, exploration and immersive experiences. We therefore encourage in-school WIOA vendors (those that are not school districts) to partner with these team members and coordinators in the schools for internship placement support and collaboration on additional career readiness activities in-school youth can participate in. The Masshire Berkshire Workforce Board can assist in making these connections to school coordinators and team members.*

3. Can we also use other funds that may be available to us to support some of the youth work requirements? How would that fit into the grant request Budget? *Yes absolutely! Please feel free to add an in-kind line to the budget and narrative to describe all in-kind contributions.*

4. We will be working with various partners (not subcontractors) to meet the 14 Required Elements. Do we need to have MOUs in place with each partner before submitting the grant application. If not, do we need to have established communication with each partner to determine their roles/responsibilities before submitting the grant or can that be accomplished once awarded? *It is not required to have MOUs in place for partners providing the 14 Required Youth Elements nor is it required you have established communication on partner roles prior to submitting the application. It is entirely up to vendors if they prefer to have MOUs in place with their partners providing the Required Youth Elements.*

5. During the follow-up period in Year 2, are we still expected to be paying the youth for ongoing work experience established during Year 1? Are we expected to continue making the 14 Required Elements available, just like in Year 1? *Once youth exit the program after their year-long period of participation (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027), vendors are not expected to continue providing the work experience or provide needed elements. This is entirely up to vendors if they would like to continue these services via alternative funding streams during the follow-up period.*

6. The RFP (page 10) mentions paid and unpaid work experience provided to youth. If we provide unpaid work experience, do we still need to provide paid experience in addition, that would total 20% of the grant budget? *No. Costs toward the work experience component can also include staff time spent on identifying host employers and designing employment / internship experiences, developing and implementing work readiness sessions, employer orientations, worksite reviews, assisting employers and youth with completing Work-Based-Learning Plans (performance evaluations), etc.*

7. Are we able to employ the youth in our office or do they need to be outside employer experiences? *You can certainly employ youth at your organization.*

8. We often pay youth/interns a stipend for work performed over a specific time period. Would that still need to be calculated/adjusted at \$15 per hour? *Yes, it is best to factor the stipend amounts at \$15/hr. If you end up preferring the youth receive a wage, the Career Center will provide the payroll and liability coverage.*

9. We understand that wages to youth in subsidized work experiences will be paid through Berkshire Training & Employment Inc. (BTE) while still coming out of the grant budget we may be awarded. Is it correct that a 1099 tax form will need to be provided to the youth? If so, who is responsible for preparing that...18 Degrees or BTE? Whose payroll is the youth considered to be on? *If you are providing a stipend to youth, 18 Degrees will need to provide the stipend and 1099 the youth (only if they are receiving over \$600). If the youth are paid a wage, the total amount of wages, FICA and Workman's Comp as part of your award will remain at the Career Center as they will put the youth on their payroll and provide the liability coverage.*

10. How often does the Youth ISS (page 24 of Application) need to be updated? Do we use that to complete the Monthly Reporting Form? *The Career Center will update your youth ISS's based on the information you provide them on the Monthly Reporting Form and monthly correspondence with Kelly and her team.*

11. Are we responsible for measuring/reporting the Performance Indicators (page 6 of RFP)? *Yes. All youth progress leading to and meeting their performance goals must be relayed to Career Center staff during the program delivery and follow-up periods and are a part of the monthly reporting / correspondence between vendors and the Career Center.*

12. Because these are Federal funds, are we expected to adhere to new policies regarding DEI and therefore need to "scrub" our website of anything that may be contrary to Federal policies? *No.*

13. Where can we find the total amount of money we can request for our program? *Currently our WIOA allocation has yet to be released from the state; however, you can use this year's allocation as a guide in basing the amount of funding available for in-school youth programming. Federal law requires we utilize no less than 75% of our allocation in serving the Out-of-school youth population leaving up to 25% in support of in-school programs.*

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

14. Can we use the funding to cover a salary? *Yes.*

15. Do you have a copy of the recording that you might be able to send us? *The Bidders Conference recording, along with the RFP Q&A can be found here:*
<https://masshireberkshire.com/youth/youth-programs/>