



SOUTHCENTRAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
BOARD

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LOCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

Program Years 2022-2025

(July 01, 2022, thru June 30, 2023)

TO PROVIDE

Employment, Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) Program
Training, Services and/or Activities

Related to Employment, Education, and Job Retention

SCPa Works Counties

Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, York

The enclosed specifications may be modified as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the South Central Workforce Development Board, or the Local Management Committee Local Elected Officials Board without prior notice to Proposers.

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Section 1: Introduction

SCPa Works

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under the authority of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIOA) established the South Central Local Workforce Development Area to include **Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, York** (referred to as South Central Region). The Southcentral Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (WDB), incorporated as the 501(c)(3) non-profit Southcentral Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, is the grant recipient and administrator of these and other employment and training funds received for programs operated throughout the South Central Region.

Designated as a WIB and now a WDB, SCPa Works has a federal mandate to be the lead organization for workforce development planning and to arrange for a system of service delivery that meets the workforce needs of business and the public alike. SCPa Works is responsible for developing and implementing strategies around a broad workforce development agenda. SCPa Works diverse partners in the workforce development system range from public agencies, to private and non-profit businesses, to education and training providers, to community and economic development partnerships, to job seekers using the PA CareerLink[®] system.

SCPa Works is governed by a private sector-led Workforce Development Board and one Commissioner from each of the eight counties in the South Central Region who serve on the Local Elected Officials Board. The SCPa Works Local Management Committee (LMC) is a standing committee of the WDB that oversees and directs the local operation of contracted EARN programs ensuring they provide participants with meaningful opportunities to access the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in employment and attain self-sufficiency, subject to the requirements of the current and/or modified **EARN Manual**. The LMC is comprised of representatives from each of the eight County Assistance Offices (CAO), Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations staff from South Central Region PA CareerLink[®] sites, and SCPa Works.

The EARN program training, services, activities, and education efforts are designed to provide recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) with opportunities to become self-sufficient. The focus and measures of success of the EARN program according to the **EARN Manual** are tied to concrete and immediate performance goals; unsubsidized employment and job retention. Successful attainment of these goals is dependent on consistent dedication to motivating and transitioning a disadvantaged person into the world of work and self-sustainability. The key to successful performance is creating and maintaining a supportive environment that puts learning in the greater context of work and motivates clients to participate in all prescribed services and/or activities for the required number of hours.

Purpose of Request for Proposal

SCPa Works, through this RFP, competitively seeks one or more qualified providers to deliver comprehensive career development, work readiness, placement, and retention services to CAO clients who are referred to EARN programming in the South Central Region. SCPa Works seeks a provider who will ensure referred CAO clients are enrolled and participate in a high-quality service strategy that will assist participants in developing and attaining meaningful goals related to career planning, skill

attainment, educational attainment, advanced training, job placement, job retention, and self-sufficiency outcomes.

Note this request uses the singular form of the proposer, provider, etc. although SCPa Works may choose to select more than one proposal/provider. SCPa WORKS will determine the number of contracts awarded based on proposals received. SCPa Works has the right to fund a lower-ranked proposal over a higher-ranked proposal because of valid policy considerations, including but not limited to geographical considerations.

SCPa Works seeks a provider who will assume responsibility for offering program services to targeted populations as referred by the CAOs in the Central Region. The provider must demonstrate the capacity to develop relationships with various agencies throughout the South Central Region in an overall effort to coordinate activities that address the employment and training needs as well as the social barriers that EARN participants often encounter. The provider must be able to work closely with SCPa Works and the LMC and respond accordingly to their guidance and needs. The provider must demonstrate a willingness and ability to leverage funds and services. SCPa Works views the PA CareerLink® system and its facilities as the flagship in the local delivery of workforce development programs and services in the South Central Region, therefore the integration of the EARN program is required.

Proposals may include services in any or all of the South Central Region counties as proposals from multiple respondents will be considered in order to assure programming availability to clients from all eight CAOs. Review the Facilities section of the RFP carefully as space for EARN programming is not currently available in all PA CareerLink® sites. Note that referrals from ALL eight CAOs must be served, including those without a PA CareerLink® and those with a small PA CareerLink® which do not offer space needed for EARN programming.

Funds released through this RFP will be contracted to provide EARN services in the South Central Region from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, with an option to extend funding annually for up to three years through June 30, 2025, based on successful performance outcomes, available funding, and the discretion of the LMC and SCPa Works. Awarded contracts will be cost reimbursement with a performance-based component. By submitting a proposal, an organization agrees they must adhere to any and all Federal, State, and SCPa Works policy changes. SCPa Works is an equal opportunity employer.

Section 2: RFP Process and Instructions for Submitting a Proposal

Eligible Applicants

Proposals will be accepted from any private for-profit entity, public or private non-profit entity, government agency, local educational agency, community-based organization, or labor organization that demonstrates the experience and/or capacity to deliver programs to the identified eligible population. The following entities are encouraged to apply: (not limited to)

- Education entities, including school districts or Career and Technology Centers (CTCs)
- Community-based organizations, social service agencies, public housing agencies, juvenile probation departments, or other related programs working with individuals who have barriers to employment
- PA CareerLink® partners

- Other for- or not-for-profit organizations

Eligible organizations with or without previous experience as a contractor, with SCPa Works, are encouraged to submit proposals. Proposals from consortia, partnerships, or other combinations of organizations are allowable, but proposals must identify one organization as the lead agency with which SCPa Works will subcontract directly.

Proposers must agree to a provision of services and demonstrate an ability to fulfill requirements according to the [Agreement of Basic Requirements](#)

Expected Timeline

Proposers will follow the timeline:

RFP Released: (Available at www.scpaworks.org)	October 7, 2021
Notify SCPa Works of Intent to Submit Proposal by: (emailed to info@scpaworks.org)	October 20, 2021
Deadline for Questions	October 20, 2021
Bidders Conference	October 27, 2021
Proposals Due:	December 17, 2021
Evaluation Committee Review and Negotiations Begin:	February 2022
Recommendation to WDB and LEO	February 2022
Notification on Status of Proposals:	April 2022
Contract(s) Start:	July 1, 2022

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance will be provided through a written question and answer format. Applicants will be given an opportunity to identify specific questions and submit them in writing to SCPa Works via email only. Questions must be emailed on an ongoing basis but must be submitted by 4:00 P.M. on October 20, 2021, to info@scpaworks.org.

Answers to submitted questions will be posted on www.scpaworks.org within 7 business days of receipt and all questions will be answered at the bidder's conference on October 27, 2021. Consistent with strict procurement policies, SCPa Works will provide no technical or program assistance to individual proposers.

Proposal Submission

Responses must be submitted through the SMAPPLY website. Links to the submission site will be shared at the bidder's conference for those that registered.

Proposals that are in response to this RFP are **due no later than 4:00 PM on December 17, 2021**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Review Process

Stage 1: SCPa Works staff will initially evaluate each proposal for compliance, with emphasis placed on completeness and responsiveness to requisite program criteria.

- All required services for the program are addressed
- All requested information and documentation is included
- The proposal is submitted in accordance with the RFP
- The narrative meets the minimum review score required for Stage 2

Stage 2: Proposals that have met the minimum criteria will then be reviewed and ranked by an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee is composed of Local Management Committee members, WDB members, and SCPa Works staff who have no fiduciary or perceived interest in competing for the EARN program.

Stage 3: The recommendations of the Evaluation Committee will be presented to the full LMC Committee for WDB approval. The WDB will then make recommendations to the Local Elected Officials Board for contracting. Contracts will be issued directly to the selected provider(s) by SCPa Works. It is anticipated that cost-reimbursement contracts with performance-based components will be awarded as a result of this RFP solicitation; providers will be reimbursed actual, allowable, and allocable costs not to exceed the maximums stated in the contract.

Section 3: EARN Eligibility and Required Program Elements

EARN Eligibility

The participants to be served will be recipients of TANF whose eligibility is determined by the CAO; the CAO refers clients to the EARN program where they will be enrolled as EARN participants. Many of the EARN participants will have barriers to employment, both social and economic in nature. Providers must offer a holistic program designed to help EARN participants overcome barriers; including; licensed family advocates, for needs assessments with the ability to make connections to local organizations and agencies from whom services can be leveraged, is important to ensure the skills, training, and supportive needs of individual participants are met.

County Assistance Office

Strong evidence of an ability to develop and maintain effective and positive working relationships with the County Assistance Office is critical. The ability to identify information that should be shared with the CAO, respond to CAO questions and concerns, and ultimately provide outstanding employment and training programming to CAO clients is a necessity. The provider will be expected to communicate with the CAO

frequently. Formal meetings with the CAO called Direct Service Team Meetings are a requirement. The eight CAOs in the South Central Region define the frequency of meetings as approved by the LMC and the provider is expected to accommodate.

EARN Service Delivery and Required Program Elements

An innovative program design addressing the long-term employability of EARN program participants and working creatively while in compliance with the **EARN Manual** and all requirements set forth herein is welcome. The program design must help EARN participants connect to employment by guiding them along with a structured framework of services and activities. It must be connected to the full array of services available through the PA CareerLink® system.

SCPWorks values a program design that will help EARN participants reach their full potential. Note that SCPWorks reserves the right to approve or deny, in part or full, any program model suggestions. EARN participants will be directed based on individual skills, needs, and goals; all will be at different stages of ability to reach those goals.

Proposers are encouraged to develop innovative service delivery options that:

- Take into account CAO and EARN participant feedback and is responsive to identified needs
- Include relevant opportunities for EARN participants to meet together in groups to facilitate shared job search activities and peer support both virtual and in-person
- Help EARN participants define goals in an attainable way and outline them into career pathways
- Encourage EARN participants to maintain participation in the program and meet required hours each week through in-person and virtual services
- Has an overall participant-centered approach so that individuals know what's in it for them and are supported throughout the journey to the placement and beyond
- Encourage Dual Enrollment into WIOA
- Achieve and exceed performance target

The program elements and general expectations regarding the scope of work are outlined under each category in the EARN Manual. Each of the program elements must be made readily available to any and all enrolled EARN participants who have a need for the program element. Refer to the **EARN Manual** for further details at www.scpworks.org

Program Referrals

Outreach efforts to increase program enrollment rates and continued participation are expected to begin when a program receives a referral in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS). Outreach efforts are to include contacting program participants prior to their enrollment date to introduce themselves and their program, confirming the participant's attendance, and answering any additional questions that the participant may have. Programs must make a minimum of three contact attempts should the initial attempt be unsuccessful. Documentation of contact attempts is required. Programs are required to develop a plan for referral outreach available to the Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) via the Program Implementation Plan (PIP).

The provider will make every reasonable accommodation to accept referrals every day of the business week.

EARN programs may set their orientation times and dates; however, a client must be given the opportunity to report to the program and should not have their referral rejected if they are late for the program's orientation or scheduled appointment date. Initial meetings with the client may be done via phone or other electronic means. The client does not need to physically report to the EARN center to be enrolled in programming.

In the case of an employed individual being referred to EARN for additional participation hours, case managers should meet with the client at a time and location that does not interfere with the client's scheduled work hours.

Project Referral Rejection Codes

If the client does not show for orientation the EARN service provider will conduct outreach to the client in an attempt to enroll and engage the client. If the client refuses to cooperate at the orientation, the provider should speak with the client one-on-one to determine how they can assist the client in engaging in and successfully completing the program.

Referral rejection codes will be used to track the reason a client's referral to EARN is rejected prior to enrollment. The EARN service provider must data enter these codes in CWDS.

The following project referral rejection codes may be used with EARN:

Code 1 – Failed to report (after documented repeated attempts at outreach)

Code 2 – Refused to cooperate (after documented repeated attempts at outreach)

Code 4 – No Action Taken (System Generated)

Code 5 – Other

Code T – Referred in error

Initial Program Enrollment

The EARN service provider must enroll the client in the program on the date they report to or agree to participate via phone or other electronic means. Data entry of the client's enrollment in CWDS must be completed within three business days of the date of enrollment.

NOTE: The client's reporting date is not included in this 3 business-day count.

To enroll a client (Project Code D—or NC for Philadelphia), the EARN service provider will enter an enrollment date in CWDS. After enrolling the client in the program, the EARN service provider must open at least one activity code to track participation. Under NO circumstance is a client to have an open project without an open activity code.

Once notified that the participant is to be enrolled, the EARN service provider will conduct a case review to become familiar with the client's background and the situation in order to determine what additional

assistance the participant will need to achieve family economic security. The EARN service provider will review the information below:

- Family and social history
- Medical information including physician, clinic, and hospital records
- Work history
- Information regarding services the participant is receiving from other agencies or providers
- Case narratives
- Job readiness assessment
- Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR), (for ETANF participants this includes eligibility track number and the reason for eligibility)
- Information regarding the participant's current and past participation in Employment and Training (E&T) programs
- Educational activities and outcome of those experiences
- Any other pertinent information

Orientation

Each participant shall have an in-person orientation, either individually or in a group, to the EARN Program within five business days of the participant's referral. During participant orientation, the EARN service provider must review the EARN policies and participant requirements with the participant, including:

- The goals and purpose of the program
- The overall approach to reaching these goals including participation in a joint planning process to identify needs and appropriate activities
- Attendance requirements to include hourly requirements, holidays, excused and unexcused absence policy
- Participant and EARN rights and responsibilities
- Explanation of how participant progress is tracked and measured
- Information on the grievance procedure
- Confidentiality agreement

- Authorization for release of participant information
- Program requirements (lunch, breaks, behavior, dress code, reporting changes, income, submission of paystubs to the EARN and the CAO)

Family Assessment

For TANF participants, the EARN service provider and its team shall conduct an in-person comprehensive household assessment that identifies participant strengths and barriers to employment and family economic security. The assessment shall be completed within 7 business days after the enrollment date. As part of the assessment, the participant's social indicators of health (SIOH) shall be identified, including but not limited to:

- Interests and goals
- Household composition
- Current employment and financial status
- Education
- Language and literacy (including English proficiency)
- Housing
- Food security and nutritional education
- Clothing
- Transportation
- General and mental health
- Drug and alcohol dependency
- Criminal History
- Criminal background inquiry and checks
- Domestic violence
- Pregnancy
- Childcare and parenting
- Support network
- Work experience
- Work Capacity Assessment if required

The appropriate activity for the assessment period will be AC 8 - Assessment. Based on the results of the assessment and initial licensed counselor appointment, the EARN program will determine the next appropriate activity and develop the service plan.

Service Plans

The EARN service provider will use the comprehensive household assessment to coordinate with the participant to create and execute a service plan called an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) in CWDS. The IEP will be a living document. In coordination with the participant, the EARN service provider shall develop and use the IEP as the comprehensive plan to:

- Describe goals, objectives, interests, and planned services of the participant, as determined from the assessment promote strategies to be instituted to address the participant's barriers and achieve goals to gain and maintain family economic security such as:
 - Treatments (including substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, and other rehabilitative treatments)
 - Interventions (including crisis mitigation and barrier remediation)

- Education
- Training and credentialing
- Work experience (such as pre-apprenticeship or other unpaid work experience)
- Community service opportunities
- Job readiness and skills (such as soft skills and employment tools, basic life skills, barrier remediation, career exploration, assessments, and aptitude testing)
- Measure goals, including specific outcomes, to be achieved to demonstrate stabilization of the participant's barriers and needs, the time frame(s) for achieving them, the resources available and to be used to realize the outcomes, and the desires and motivation of the participant that may have an impact on their success
- If required, work with a multidisciplinary group consisting of a CAO worker or an agent authorized by the Department and professionals from various disciplines, which may include physicians, psychologists, and vocational or behavioral rehabilitation specialists to develop a service plan that meets the needs of the participant

In order to remain enrolled in EARN, the client must agree to the terms of the IEP and sign and date the document at the time of completion, as well as at the time of any updates.

NOTE: The EARN service provider is to create the IEP in CWDS 2.0 using the Add Plan feature. Noncompliance with the IEP should be documented in the case notes and discussed at the local DST meeting.

As part of the ongoing services to the participant, the EARN service provider will:

- 1. Conduct and document participant contacts on all days of engagement in unpaid activity time. This can be done via face-to-face meetings, telephony, or electronic means. The EARN service provider shall use one or more of the following methods and/or other appropriate methods deemed helpful in engaging and supporting the participant in working through the IEP:**
 - Intensive case management
 - Coaching
 - Peer-to-peer experiences

- 2. Identify and refer the participant and/or their family to the appropriate local community resource(s) to achieve goals identified in the IEP, such as:**
 - Shelter
 - Education
 - Adult Basic Education
 - English as a Second Language
 - Post-secondary institutions
 - Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) providers
 - Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT)
 - WIOA Title I Individual Training Accounts
 - Registered Pre-Apprenticeships

Legal Assistance

- Legal services
- Criminal background inquiries and checks
- Criminal record expungement
- Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network

Life skills, including:

- Financial literacy
- Parenting
- Nutrition
- Other appropriate information

Another Employment & Training Provider

- EARN program in another area
- Work Ready
- KEYS
- ELECT
- SNAP 50/50
- SNAP EARN

3. Advocate for the participant and their family when connecting to local community resources by providing participants with:

- An active connection and point of contact
- Assistance with application and scheduling
- Ongoing case management and services while participant engages with the community resource

4. Employ or have arrangements to provide access to licensed professional counselors, social workers, therapists, allied health professionals, or a combination of these professionals to provide counseling services and outlets for discussion regarding any and all aspects of a participant's life. This can be inclusive of mental, social, physical, emotional, and behavioral health which may be beyond the scope of regular provider staff.

- Licensed professionals must be available in sufficient numbers so that each participant is able to have an introductory 1-on-1 meeting with an appropriately licensed professional within 14 business days of their program enrollment.
- Licensed professionals must be made available on-site at least one day per month. 1-on-1 meeting days comply with this requirement.
- Licensed professionals must be made available to participants upon request. The licensed professional, or their organization, must respond to participant requests for services within 24 hours. At a minimum, the response must include documented outreach to schedule an appointment.
- The EARN service provider shall require the professional to have flexible hours of contact, including but not limited to weekends and after "traditional" work hours.

- The EARN service provider shall continue to provide participants with access to these services as often as needed through the end of the 12-month retention period.

5. Provide activities and programs that lead to acquiring job-related and job readiness skills in addition to education and employment activities. Some job-related and job readiness skills may include but are not limited to:

- Time management
- Analytical thinking
- Executive function and decision making
- Verbal and written communications
- Leadership
- Professional behaviors and attire
- Career exploration
- Aptitude testing
- Interpersonal communication
- Collaboration
- Problem-solving
- Financial literacy
- Resume writing
- Interview techniques
- Education on regional High Priority Occupations and local job market

6. Provide or refer participants to formal credentialing programs or training, which may include:

- Industry skill certifications to achieve and demonstrate skills necessary for specific occupations
- Upgrades of an individual's job-related skills including instructional certificate programs that are awarded based upon completion or accumulated credits
- Associate degree programs including those that result in an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or an Associate of Applied Science degree
- Baccalaureate degree programs including those that result in a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or a Bachelor of Applied Science degree
- Organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training other than a degree
- High School Equivalency, Adult Basic Education, and English as Second Language programs as part of a career pathway when these classes are integrated within, being taken concurrently with, or for a limited-duration prerequisite to post-secondary education or training as part of a career pathway program

7. Facilitate the transfer of participants to other DHS employment and training programs, when appropriate and approved by both the CAO and the receiving program. Program transfer options include, but are not limited to:

KEYS: The EARN service provider shall transfer to the KEYS program those participants who have enrolled at a Pennsylvania community college to pursue an education activity that leads to receipt of a diploma or certificate. The EARN service provider shall coordinate educational activities at community colleges with the KEYS program and shall terminate the EARN participants who meet all requirements for KEYS and desire to participate in KEYS. The EARN service provider shall facilitate the referral and transfer to KEYS. The EARN service provider may not terminate EARN participants who have expressed interest in community college but have not yet enrolled. The EARN service provider shall coordinate with the KEYS Program Coordinator when participants express a desire to enter community college. If such participants subsequently enroll in a community college, the EARN service provider shall terminate the EARN participant who meets all requirements to enroll in KEYS and shall facilitate the referral and transfer to KEYS. The KEYS program will request an updated AMR and referral to KEYS from the CAO using the reverse referral process.

ELECT: Is a joint initiative between the Department and Pennsylvania Department of Education that enables school districts and intermediate units to help pregnant and parenting teens earn a high school diploma or HSE credential, become better parents, and transition to employment, career training or higher education. Their services are available to students ages 22 and younger. The EARN service provider shall coordinate educational activities with the ELECT programs and shall terminate the EARN participation of TANF participants who meet all requirements to enroll in ELECT and desire to do so and shall facilitate the referral and transfer to ELECT. The ELECT program will request an updated AMR and referral to ELECT from the CAO.

8. Place participants in unsubsidized employment. To identify and fill employment opportunities, the EARN service provider should utilize the resources within the local area including but not limited to, Workforce Development Boards, existing and newly developed relationships with local employers, chambers of commerce, employer lead groups, career workshops, job fairs, and Registered Apprenticeship programs. The EARN service provider shall require participants to meet in person with potential employers, where appropriate. The EARN service provider shall advocate and advise their participants to accept employment consistent with their IEP even if the employee will not result in a placement performance outcome.

The EARN service provider achieves a placement performance outcome when a participant is working in unsubsidized employment (**Activity 33**) at least 80 hours in a four consecutive week period at the higher of the state minimum wage plus two dollars per hour or the federal minimum wage plus two dollars per hour. Once the participant is placed in employment and has entered the retention period, the EARN service provider shall contact the participant weekly for the first three months and bi-weekly or as often as needed based on the participant's IEP thereafter.

9. Provide wraparound services. Wraparound services are TANF employment and training services specific to individuals who are required to meet a certain hourly work requirement to be compliant with the federal TANF employment and training requirements but who simultaneously participate in unsubsidized employment. For the purposes of service provision, the EARN service provider shall provide wraparound services to participants who are not able to meet the TANF hourly work requirements through unsubsidized employment alone when TANF benefits remain open.

10. Assist and incentivize participants who obtain employment to achieve satisfactory performance, retain employment, and increase earnings over time through the provision of retention services. The EARN service provider shall provide retention services when an individual obtains unsubsidized employment and is placed in CWDS Extended Hold indicating the initial TANF recipient supports and services have ended, and retention supports and services have begun. The EARN service provider shall provide retention support and services for up to one year after the participant's TANF benefit closes due to earned income.

Determining Hours of Participation

The number of core and non-core hours a client is required to participate in will be determined by the CAO and recorded on the client's AMR. The EARN service provider must ensure the client participates for at least the minimum number of hours as determined by the CAO caseworker and recorded on the AMR. Please see page 7 in the **EARN Manual** for additional information www.scpaworks.org

Participation Hours

- Core Hours: Required for all individuals who are mandatory to participate in Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training.
- Non-Core Hours: Available if additional hours are needed to meet the minimum work requirement after the required core activity hours are met or when all opportunities to participate in a countable core activity have been exhausted or are not available.
- An individual can participate in more than one core activity to meet the minimum work requirement. Once the required number of core hours is met, an individual may choose to participate in any core or non-core activity.

Program Design

The provider will take full advantage of the flexibility the **EARN Manual** offers for an innovative program design. SCPa Works is looking for Annual Program Innovation. Working within the allowable activities, the program design should be one centered on the individuals served and focused on preparation for and attainment of unsubsidized employment along a career pathway, retention, and self-sufficiency. SCPa Works values a holistic approach to program delivery and views collaboration with partners, including within the South Central region's integrated PA CareerLink[®] system, as important in order to best provide resources and services to help participants reach self-sufficiency.

SCPa Works also values attainment of needed skills including employability or soft skills such as communication, effectively dealing with conflict, and dependability along with educational skills, including basic skills and occupational skills needed for specific jobs. At a minimum, the program design must be participant-centered, case management intensive, and include a menu of services or include a plan for referral to a partner agency, which meets the definition of the allowable Activity Codes. Of particular interest, a program design should include effective plans to provide the activities defined in the **EARN Manual** with additional information provided below:

Transportation

Transportation is a common barrier faced by EARN participants in the South Central region. A majority of individuals in need of transportation live in rural areas that lack access to a public transportation system. The CAO may be able to provide bus passes or mileage to a limited number of participants for whom that meets the need, but given the rural geography and the need to provide the most cost-effective mode of transportation, the provider must propose a plan for transportation.

Facilities

The provider is required to integrate direct program staff into South Central region PA CareerLink® sites where space is available and ensure office and classroom spaces are ADA accessible, welcoming, friendly in nature, and professional.

Associated costs for one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) within PA CareerLink® sites are pre-determined and must be included in the proposed budget; estimated costs and more detailed information are provided in the **Proposal Budget** section.

All locations are as follows;

- **PA CareerLink® Adams County**, 150 V-Twin Dr., Gettysburg, PA 17325
- **PA CareerLink® Cumberland County**, 1 Alexandra Ct, Carlisle, PA 17015
- **PA CareerLink® Dauphin County**, 100 N. Cameron Street Suite 100, Harrisburg, PA 17101
- **PA CareerLink® Franklin County**, 600 Norland Ave, Chambersburg, PA 17201
- **PA CareerLink® Lebanon County**, 243 Schneider Dr., Lebanon, PA 17046
- **PA CareerLink® York County**, 841 Vogelsong Rd, York, PA 17404
- **Perry County Literacy Center (PA CareerLink® Affiliate site)** 133 S 5th St, Newport, PA 17074

Assumption of Existing Caseload

Proposers are expected to agree to assume the responsibility for providing continued services to EARN participants on the existing caseload. Assessment results conducted and job search plans developed prior to the start of the contract will be included in the case files which will transfer to the selected provider(s). The selected provider(s) will be required to implement additional assessments, as needed, in order to understand the needs of individual EARN participants and plans should be adjusted accordingly.

Staff

Staff must be trained to work with disadvantaged individuals. Sufficient staff must be in place in order to meet EARN requirements, including ensuring quality programming for the required number of hours of individual participants and to successfully implement the EARN program design. Case managers, teachers, job coaches, and employment specialists who are trained to work with the target population are

examples of qualified staff. SCPa Works values ongoing staff training grounded in proven best practices, such as Motivational Interviewing.

Please Note: SCPa Works does not support flex time or alternative schedules that are not in line with the needs of participants. While bidders may have standard operational hours, vendors must ensure that classes, training, enrollment, and recruitment are executed in the best interest of the participant.

In the event of a change in program providers as a result of this RFP, SCPa Works will require the selected provider to interview current staff.

The provider will adhere to all current laws including those for background checks and clearances. All staff assigned to work with individuals under age 18 must acquire the following background checks:

- Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check (Act 34)
- Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151)
- Federal Criminal History Record

Communication with SCPa Works

The provider must designate a point of contact for all communication with SCPa Works. All technical assistance questions will be sent to SCPa Works who will research and contact the applicable bureau within Pennsylvania’s Department of Human Services as necessary. Providers are expected to ensure SCPa Works is aware of challenges, successes, and initiatives.

Section 4: Performance Standards/Goals

Certain performance standards will be used to assess the effectiveness of the service provider. Performance standards for EARN PY 2020 – 2021 are outlined in the chart below. If the service provider does not meet the threshold/goal for any of the categories listed, a corrective action plan must be submitted.

Performance Standards

Category	Description	Threshold/Goal
Assessment	A comprehensive household assessment must be conducted and completed within 7 business days of a participant’s enrollment.	85% of all enrolled participants.
IEP	A detailed IEP must be documented and include plans to address participant challenges (barriers) and agreed-upon plans for resolution within 14 business days after the assessment is completed.	85% of all enrolled participants.

Licensed Counselor or Social Worker	<p>A network of professionals must be established so that eligible participants have an introductory meeting and are able to meet with an appropriate professional at least once a month.</p>	<p>80% of all enrolled participants will have an introductory 1-on-1 meeting with staff within 14 business days from the participant's program enrollment.</p>
Secondary Equivalency and Credentialing (including referrals to outside programs)	<p>Coordination of educational activities through referrals to ELECT service providers and the KEYS program</p> <p>--OR--</p> <p>For participants in a credentialing or secondary equivalency program, a participant must receive a diploma or certification that will provide the participant with an industry-recognized certificate or certification and marketable skill directly related to their employment goals listed on their AMR and IEP.</p>	<p>50% of all participants entering an activity that can result in a transfer or credentials are successful.</p>

EARN Program Policy and Procedures Manual

Category	Description	Threshold/Goal
Placement	<p>Placement of participants in employment where the participant is meeting 20 hours per week (80 hours per month) in Unsubsidized Employment and is paid at least two dollars above the higher of the federal or state minimum wage as of July 1 of the program year. Placement can be met at any time once employment begins until the end of the retention period.</p>	<p>70% of participants with employment must meet placement criteria.</p>
Retention	<p>Retention begins when an individual obtains unsubsidized employment (Activity 33) and is placed in CWDS Extended Hold indicating the initial TANF services have ended.</p> <p>The program is to continue to serve the individual during the retention period, up to twelve months. A participant may meet the retention goal up to two times, at six (6) months and twelve (12) months after the project ends.</p>	<p>50% of participants who are placed in employment.</p>

Earned Income	Applies to participants who have achieved Placement. At the conclusion of the 12-month retention period, the participant has increased their earned income.	75% of participants have achieved the Placement benchmark.
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DHS Monitoring

DHS will monitor EARN service providers at least annually but may conduct more frequent monitoring at its discretion. Monitoring will include a review of data systems, monthly case record reviews as well as site visits to review program compliance.

DHS will also conduct training and information sessions, along with technical assistance for the service providers as needed. EARN service providers that do not meet minimum outcomes and expectations will be asked to submit a corrective action plan addressing the deficiencies within 14 business days of notification of the deficiencies.

Regular progress reports on actions to correct the deficiencies will also be required. EARN service providers that have multiple areas of deficiencies or those who do not show progress as a result of the corrective action plans are required to participate in meetings to plan and review progress.

See Attachment H for detailed information on performance validation.

Estimated Allocations

SCPWorks has a cost-reimbursement contract with DHS. For budgeting purposes, the estimated cost-reimbursement budget available for providing EARN services to clients from the eight CAOs in the South Central region is **\$2,200,000**.

For budgeting purposes, respondents should use the funding estimate of approximately \$2,200,000 in cost-reimbursement funds for the period from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Funds can be used for:

- Staffing and staff support costs
- PA CareerLink® Resource Sharing Agreement Costs based on FTEs
- Administrative overhead (not to exceed 10%)
- Other costs allowable and related to the program design

SCPWorks reserves the option to modify contracts on a year-to-year basis. Funding for subsequent years of the contract will be determined on an annual basis and may increase or decrease based on the annual DHS allocations.

Leveraging Resources

Funds are limited. Linkages and partnerships with existing programs are encouraged and will be necessary to make the program cost-effective. Proposers are strongly encouraged to partner with other organizations to maximize funding. Proposers must describe the linkages, match, and alternate funding sources in their response. To sustain this program and identify adequate resources to build a comprehensive program, proposers should leverage both financial and programmatic resources. Please identify who your work readiness providers are and outline rules and responsibilities.

Proposal Budget

The purpose of the Project Budget is to demonstrate how the proposer will implement their plan with the funds available through this program. The budget is the basis for management, fiscal review, and audit. Project costs must be directly related to the objectives and activities of the project. The budget must cover the entire contract period. In the Project Budget, proposers will be asked to distinguish between costs that will be charged to EARN cost-reimbursement funds, EARN performance funds and those that will be included in identified leveraged funds.

The proposer shall develop a line-item budget that will enable the proposal to meet the intent and requirements of the program, ensure successful implementation of the project and be cost-effective. The proposer should prepare a realistic and prudent budget avoiding unnecessary or unusual expenditures that would detract from the accomplishment of the objectives and activities of the project. The following information is provided to assist in the preparation of the budget. Strict adherence to all required and prohibited items is expected.

All activities, services, facilities, and/or equipment, including leased items, which will be subcontracted by the proposer, must be competitively procured following applicable regulations. SCPa Works has final approval of all contract costs before funds are dispersed.

All contracts require:

- Line item budget for invoicing, program monitoring, and audit;
- Monthly invoices for actual costs incurred; and
- Sufficient documentation for all costs incurred.

Section 5: Proposal

I. Executive Summary

(500 words Max)

Include up to a 500 words summary of your proposal which includes an overview of your organization's mission and philosophy and the relevant experience serving individuals who have barriers to employment or have little to no work experience. **(Mission and Vision statement may be uploaded as an attachment)**

II. Proposal Narrative

All responses must be in accordance with the information provided within this RFP, including the **EARN Manual** and other references indicated throughout. **Maximum word count of 500 per question.**

A. Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience

(500 words per question, Max)

1. Describe your organization's capacity in serving individuals with significant social and economic barriers, indicating relevant experience providing job search and employment training leading to placement and retention in jobs?
2. If your organization operated an EARN program, the requested information in **Attachment 1** must be complete. If your organization did not operate an EARN program but did operate another program serving individuals with barriers, attach associated Performance Outcomes to your response (please make sure that the required level and the level achieved are both clearly marked). Please ensure that the data, if aggregated with the performance of other organizations, distinguishes the performance outcomes specific to your organization.
3. Describe your organization's success in meeting and exceeding performance measures, your greatest challenges in achieving outcomes, and how you did so.
4. Describe how front-line staff will be supervised and how adherence to program compliance, quality, and design will be managed and monitored.

B. Relationships and Collaboration

(500 words per question, Max)

1. Describe your ability to form and maintain positive relationships with County Assistance Offices and include a plan to forge relationships in the South Central region if they do not already exist.
2. Describe how you will use Direct Service Team meetings with the CAO to be productive in discussing the needs of CAO clients. Explain your plan for other communications with the CAO.
3. Describe plans to ensure integration with South Central region PA CareerLink® sites in which your program is proposed to operate.
4. Describe your capacity to create collaborations with other key partners, identify other key partners, explain how coordination will be accomplished, and how each will contribute to the attainment of EARN performance measures. If applicable, identify and explain any subcontracting relationships.
5. Describe your plan to leverage additional resources to supplement EARN.

C. Staffing Plan and Training

(500 words per question, Max)

1. Explain the staffing plan including:
 - a. The number of EARN participants each direct staff person will carry on a caseload.
 - b. The amount of time each direct staff person will have with EARN participants.
 - c. Duties, experience, and qualifications of known staff members indicating to which position staff will be assigned (**resumes may be attached**).

- d. Job descriptions and minimum and desired qualifications, including demonstrated ability to work with disadvantaged individuals and ability to provide quality job search programs for each proposed position should be attached in the form of job descriptions.
- e. Please attach resumes for each of the Licensed Family advocates.
2. Describe the on-boarding process/training of new staff (as applicable, including for staff who may have worked under another EARN contract, new staff at the beginning of the contract, and in the event of turnover throughout the contract) and how it will relate to successful EARN program delivery.
3. Describe how ongoing staff training and professional development will occur and how it will relate to successful EARN program delivery. Provide a list of training from the current program year (if you operate a workforce program currently). Provide an outside company that you will contract during the 22-23 year to complete Case Management training with the allocated funds attached to the proposal. **Training materials/ outline should be attached**
4. Describe your policies for ensuring participant and staff safety during face-to-face and electronic communication.
5. Describe strategies to minimize the turnover of quality staff.
6. Please attach a chart showing your organization's management and staffing structure and demonstrating how each proposed area will be served including staff coverage of the proposed area. The chart should also demonstrate how your organization will communicate with SCPa Works.

D. Facilities

(500 words per question, Max)

- Please describe the location(s) where program activities will take place. If other than the PA CareerLink® sites include whether the facilities are ADA compliant and describe the hours the facilities are available for use. Include a description of how many staff will be located in or will be providing services in each of the proposed facilities. If staff will be located in facilities other than PA CareerLink® sites, describe the benefits of such locations.

E. Enrollment Strategies

(500 words per question, Max)

1. Describe pre-enrollment strategies you will implement to ensure individuals referred to the program will arrive on their scheduled orientation day and to ensure minimal referral rejections.
2. Describe the orientation including detail regarding the activities that will be provided, how policies and requirements will be introduced, and how the benefits of the program will be communicated in an engaging way.
3. Describe how orientation might be different for individuals who were recently enrolled and exited from the EARN program then re-referred.

F. Service Delivery and Case Management

(500 words per question, Max)

1. Describe the proposed approach to the family assessment and how it will result in individualized services and inform staff about participant needs.

2. Describe strategies you will employ to ensure participants and staff develop a positive working relationship including how you will focus on the unique strengths of each participant.
3. Describe your plan to incorporate the IEP that is directly linked to performance indicators and how you will ensure it's maintained as a living document that will assist participants in:
4. Identifying strengths and areas for growth
5. Defining, evaluating, and addressing goals
6. Developing a career pathway; be specific regarding how participants will be provided with local labor market information, be exposed to careers through exploration, how they will be assisted in developing a career pathway and how they will move into retention and exit knowing future possibilities on the career pathway.
7. Describe the overall case management experience with an EARN participant that will receive throughout the program from enrollment through the exit, including strategies to continue providing effective case management and open communication after placement and while participants are in retention. Include your case management and communication philosophies and strategies. Include how the case management will address different types of learning styles.
8. Describe how you will ensure all currently enrolled EARN participants receive continuous services with minimal disruption and no negative impact on hourly requirements being met.
9. Describe plans for notifying participants, CAOs, and other community organizations about changes such as to the program design, provider, etc. as applicable.

G. Program Design

(500 words per question, Max)

1. **Attach** a flow chart of the proposed program design, outlining how an EARN participant may expect to move through the program.
2. Clearly describe your innovative and comprehensive program design, including how you will utilize each of the allowable activities listed in the **EARN Manual** to provide a robust curriculum with relevant, engaging activities that will meet each individual's required weekly hours and move them forward towards placement. Include a description of a specific proposed curriculum. In addition, include a response to the following specific questions:
3. Explain the sequence of activities and describe whether they will be provided individually or in a group. Describe how you will determine who will benefit from specific program activities. Include plans for a break in job search and plans to ensure participants do not expend allowable job search limits according to the **EARN Manual**.
4. Describe how career awareness and exploration will be provided.
5. Describe how to job search activities will be provided and explain how they will lead to placement and job retention.
6. Describe how community service activities will be provided, including the strategy to ensure a number of sites are available and ready to accept participants as needed.
7. Describe plans to offer work activities in both an in-person and virtual environment.
8. Explain how workshops will be delivered so they are engaging and relevant. Include an example of a workshop to demonstrate how delivery might look.
9. Describe how employability skills training and other opportunities and skills training valued by SCPa Works as per the **Program Design** section will effectively be incorporated into programming:
 - a. Employability/soft skills (specify: communication, handling conflict, showing up on time, etc.)

10. Explain the strategy for ensuring EARN participants have a smooth transition into placement and retention, including how intensive case management will continue to be provided and the strategies staff will employ to maintain positive working relationships with participants.
11. Describe other plans to offer transportation, such as to interviews or other employment activities.
12. Explain your strategies to help EARN participants overcome transportation barriers.

I. Data Management

(500 words per question, Max)

1. Explain how you will ensure the confidentiality of information in the case files and all information known as a result of being a provider of EARN. Describe training you will provide to staff, specifically in regard to confidentiality and HIPAA.
2. Describe how you will ensure accurate, complete timesheets are maintained each day and compiled for data entry each week. Include plans to ensure the timesheets are supervised.
3. Explain your strategy for ensuring documentation proving unsubsidized employment hours were available, accurate, and entered into CWDS in a timely manner.
4. Describe how you will accurately document and grant holidays and excused time.
5. Describe how you will ensure that your staff is properly trained and competent in ensuring compliance with accurate and timely data entry into CWDS and how this will be monitored.
6. Describe how you will maintain current case files with required information and how this will be monitored.

J. Performance and Required Outcomes

(500 words per question, Max)

1. Explain your overall strategy for ensuring that all family assessments and IEP will be completed and you will be able to meet the percentage set forth by DHS. Describe your plan and offerings available to participants to meet the credentialing matrix. Describe your plan to ensure the EARN participants meet the 70% Placement goal. Include how you plan to find appropriate placements including how you will ensure participants have access to the full array of resources available through partnership with the PA CareerLink®.
2. Describe your plans to ensure EARN participants will achieve Retention services/activities as referenced on Page 18 in RFP. Explain your plan to ensure that 75% of our participants can meet the Earned Income Benchmark.

A. Budget Narrative

(2000 Words Max for entire section, attachments do not count towards word count)

The proposer is required to submit a narrative with the Project Budget. The narrative must describe:

1. How the project's proposed budget supports the stated objectives and activities in the project;
2. How funds are allocated to minimize administrative costs and support direct services to participants;
3. Indirect cost rate (if applicable);

4. Any unusual expenditures;
5. Additional information regarding each staff-person, the annual salary, the percent of the time that will be charged to EARN, the employer of record, and the primary location of staff as outlined in **Attachment 2 – Budget Forms**;
6. Narrative describing all proposed subcontracts, including the subcontracting organization, the amount that will be subcontracted, and the function the subcontractor will fulfill as outlined in **Attachment 2– Budget Forms**; and
7. Narrative describing the source and use of all matching funds as outlined in **Attachment 2 – Budget Forms**
8. Please note any non-local staff billed to program costs, must state specific mission, process, plan, dates & meeting times.

B. Budget Form – Attachment 2

Complete the required form with the following definitions in mind.

- **Administrative Costs:** personnel and/or operational costs required and incurred for official business in the coordination of administrative functions under EARN. Some examples include accounting, financial, procurement and purchasing, payroll, personnel management, and general legal services. Administrative costs are capped at 10% of the cost reimbursement budget. Overages charged to performance funds awarded are also capped at 10%.
- **Program Costs:** personnel and/or operational costs required and incurred for direct delivery of workforce services for the purpose of furthering the program objectives defined in the scope of work.
- **Equipment:** purchases for items with a useful life greater than one year which may include computers, furniture, cameras, Smartboards, vehicles, etc. Please note: equipment purchased is considered the property of the SCPa WORKS and will be required to be returned at the conclusion or termination of the contract. Purchases of equipment must be approved by SCPa WORKS in advance and must be tagged with an SCPa WORKS inventory tag.
- **Note:** The purchase and ongoing maintenance of equipment, including antivirus protection, setup, software, insurance, etc. are the responsibility of the proposer and must be budgeted for accordingly.
- **Direct Participant Costs:** those costs that are spent directly on individual participants and are tracked by individual enrollment. Possible costs include participant incentive services, wages and benefits, and supplies directly provided to participants. Note there are differences regarding allowable costs from the cost-reimbursement allocation.

The basis for Calculations:

- **PA CareerLink® Resource Sharing Agreement Costs:** SCPa Works has set aside funds to cover the cost associated with staff being located in a PA CareerLink® site. For **each** FTE that will be housed in one or more PA CareerLink® sites, enter the appropriate number of FTEs to be located at each site in the Operational Expenses line item which covers the following for staff working directly with participants:

Staff Support

- The PA CareerLink® Administrator provides direction, management, and coordination of all operations within the site to ensure that services are operated efficiently and are in compliance with the SCPa Works strategic plan. Support staff provides assistance with administrative tasks; managing customer traffic; direct customer support as needed in open computer labs; and instruction in PA CareerLink® workshops open to the public. Please note all vendors are expected to participate in every careerlink

Facility

Rent and utilities, including heat and air conditioning. Electric, water, sewer; local and long-distance telephone service; high-speed internet; and parking.

Technology/Business Equipment

Computer labs with internet access; copier(s), fax machine(s).

Furniture

Office cubicle furnishing for one staff member, including desk, desk chair, and filing cabinet.

Operations

Basic office supplies; standard business postage, not to include mass mailings.

Proposer and any subcontracted entity of the proposer are responsible for all applicable liability coverage and content coverage for any furniture/materials purchased by the proposer/subcontractor and stored at the PA CareerLink® site(s).

Direct Participant Costs:

- Include a requested budget for direct costs associated with work activities, including subsidized wage contracts.

Matching Funds: Proposers are expected to seek in-kind contributions and/or leveraged funds from non-WIOA sources to assist in the operation of this project, including but not limited to in-kind services, equipment, or space, employer contributions toward work experience/internships, etc.

In addition to the Budget Form, proposers must attach one separate electronic copy of each of the last two years' audited financial statements and one copy (either electronic or hard copy) of the current business license if applicable.

Section 6: Disclaimer

SCPa Works reserves the right to cancel or modify this request for proposal or the scope or funding of an approved WIOA program to any extent necessary to ensure compliance with state and/or federal guidelines regarding WIOA or if available WIOA funding is impacted due to the federal and/or state budget appropriations. All successful proposers must demonstrate the capability to modify the program design in order to comply with new regulations and/or changes to available funds, and by submitting a proposal, agree to do so.

SCPa Works may, at its discretion, request presentations by, or meetings with, any or all respondents, to clarify or negotiate modifications to the respondent's proposal. However, SCPa Works reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted.

SCPa Works may decide not to fund part or all of a proposal even though it is found to be in the competitive range if in the opinion of SCPa Works, the services proposed are not needed, or the costs are higher than SCPa Works finds reasonable in relation to the overall funds available, or if past management concerns lead SCPa Works to believe that the respondent has undertaken more services that it can reasonably provide.

SCPa Works reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, received as a result of this request or to negotiate separately with respondents. A contract for the accepted proposal will be based upon the factors described in this RFP.

SCPa Works has the right to fund a lower-ranked proposal over a high ranked proposal because of valid policy considerations, including but not limited to, organizational experience, geographical considerations, leveraging of outside resources, and target populations.

Providers will allow local, state, and federal representatives access to all DHS records, program materials, staff, and participants. In addition, providers are required to maintain all DHS records for three years after SCPa Works submits the final expenditure report to DHS.

SCPa Works reserves the right to determine both the number and funding levels of contracts financially awarded. Such determination will depend upon overall fund availability and other factors arising during the review process. Proposals submitted which are over the maximum amount of funds specified for this RFP will be rejected.

SCPa Works is not responsible for any costs incurred by respondents prior to the selection. The cost to develop and submit a proposal in response to this RFP is not reimbursable.

This RFP is being solicited based on available funds.

Materials submitted with the proposal, and the proposal itself, become the property of the SCPa Works and will not be returned.

SCPa Works must comply with Pennsylvania's Right-To-Know Law, Act 3 of 2008, effective January 1, 2009, and may be requested and required to release information from proposals received in response to this RFP.

All proposals submitted will receive a response as to the action taken by the SCPa Works. Respondents may request a written debriefing on the significant weaknesses of their application.

The submission of a proposal to SCPa Works does not assure or imply an award of a contract to the firm submitting the proposal. SCPa Works reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, to negotiate any offer made, and/or to cancel or amend any part of this application package for whatever reason.

