

Request for Proposals (RFQ)
Transitional Jobs Program for Justice-Impacted Individuals
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Request for Quote Issue Date: August 4, 2025
Bidders Conference Questions Deadline: August 13, 2025
Bidders Conference: August 18, 2025
Proposals Due: September 5, 2025
Evaluations: September 15 - October 10, 2025
Anticipated Award Notification: November 11, 2025
Anticipated Contract Duration: January 1 - December 31, 2026
Funding Amount: Up to \$150,000

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds this initiative through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Federal funds will finance 100% of the project.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
SCPa Works and its contracted providers reflect Equal Opportunity
Employers/Programs.

Background

The South Central Workforce Development Board, D/B/A SCPa Works, leads the public workforce development system in South Central Pennsylvania, covering Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lebanon, Perry, and York Counties. With a mission to unlock the human talent that drives business and individual success, SCPa Works coordinates strategic investments in workforce development that reflect the region's evolving demographics, labor market needs, and equity goals.

SCPa Works represents an annual workforce investment of nearly \$14 million into employment and training programs for youth and adults across the South Central region. These investments are made through partnerships with local training providers, employers, educators, and community-based organizations to ensure job seekers and businesses have access to the tools, talent, and opportunities within the communities where the individuals need to thrive.

The South Central region continues to experience steady population growth, increasing racial and ethnic diversity, and a rapidly aging workforce. At the same time, significant disparities persist in postsecondary attainment, labor force participation, and access to high-quality employment among historically marginalized populations. These regional dynamics present both challenges and opportunities for innovation in workforce programming.

As outlined in SCPa Works 2025-2029 Local Plan, SCPa Works is guided by a strategy focused on:

- Connecting individuals to career pathways that lead to in-demand, family-sustaining employment;
- Expanding access to training, credentials, and supportive services for individuals, including justice-impacted individuals, English language learners, and those lacking postsecondary education;
- Building strong partnerships with employers, training providers, and community-based organizations to create responsive, demand-driven workforce solutions;
- Investing in equitable, data-informed approaches that prioritize historically underserved communities, including BIPOC populations and rural residents;
- Preparing for demographic shifts by supporting both new entrants to the workforce and older workers navigating career transitions.

SCPa Works takes a holistic view of workforce development, one that aligns an individual's aspirations with employer needs, supports lifelong learning, and strengthens the economic resilience of the entire region. Through targeted initiatives and collaborative partnerships, SCPa Works is committed to advancing a workforce system that is inclusive, future-ready, and grounded in community impact.

Purpose

SCPa Works seeks quotes from qualified service providers to implement a Transitional Jobs Program targeting justice-impacted individuals across the eight-county region of South Central Pennsylvania. This program will provide short-term, subsidized work experience paired with comprehensive supportive services to help participants transition into long-term, unsubsidized employment.

Justice-impacted individuals often face systemic and structural barriers to workforce reentry. This can include limited education or credentials, housing instability, behavioral health needs, and a myriad of collateral consequences. Justice-impacted individuals often encounter long-term exclusion from career pathways, even after completing their sentences, further compounding economic insecurity and increasing the risk of recidivism.

Research demonstrates that employment is widely recognized as a key factor in reducing recidivism. Additionally, through Fair Chance Hiring Initiatives, employers are increasingly recognizing this untapped talent pool as a key component in their recruitment strategies. This program will invest in Transitional Jobs as a proven strategy for reducing recidivism, promoting skill-building, and fostering inclusive employment pathways for justice-impacted individuals in South Central PA.

Scope of Work

SCPa Works is seeking a qualified service provider(s) to implement a Transitional Jobs program focused on justice-impacted individuals across the eight-county South Central Pennsylvania region. The selected service provider(s) will be responsible for designing and delivering a holistic, employment-centered program that combines subsidized work experience, workforce readiness training, and comprehensive supportive services to support participants in overcoming barriers and transitioning into long-term, unsubsidized employment.

Definition of Transitional Jobs (per WIOA)

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [Sec. 134(d)(5)], Transitional Jobs are defined as “time-limited, wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized and are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history.” The goal of transitional jobs is to establish a work history, demonstrate success in the workplace, and develop the skills necessary to retain unsubsidized employment.

Programs must be designed to meet WIOA compliance requirements, including the use of Adult or Dislocated Worker funding, and include robust case management, career readiness training, supportive services, and employer engagement.

Core Program Components

The selected service provider(s) will be responsible for delivering the following:

- **Career Pathway Planning:** Program design must include a structured orientation and career exploration component, delivered early in the participant’s experience. The orientation should provide participants with a clear understanding of how the transitional job fits into a larger career trajectory and what supports are available to help the individuals move forward.
- **Workforce Preparation Activities:** Job readiness workshops focused on workplace behavior, communication, dependability, time management, and digital literacy. Instruction should be designed to prepare individuals for long-term success in the workplace.

- Paid Transitional Job Placements: Short-term (typically 8-12 weeks), subsidized employment placements with public, private, or nonprofit employers that provide on-the-job learning, supervision, and basic skill development.
- Case Management and Supportive Services: Trauma-informed, participant-centered case management that connects individuals to transportation, childcare, housing referrals, mental health services, and other supports necessary for job retention.
- Employer Partnerships: Coordination with local businesses to develop meaningful job placements and mentorship opportunities. MOUs or letters of support from at least three employers in target industries are required.
- Follow-Up Services: Support services for up to 12 months after exit to ensure employment retention and address ongoing challenges.

Eligible Populations

Participants enrolled in Transitional Jobs programming must meet WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker eligibility. SCPa Works prioritizes individuals who are justice-impacted, including but not limited to:

- Individuals currently or previously incarcerated;
- Individuals on probation or parole;
- Individuals with court involvement or reentry challenges.

There are no disqualifications based on the nature of an individual's offense or conviction. Any individual who is justice-impacted may be served through this program, including those currently participating or intending to participate in work-release programs, provided all applicable WIOA eligibility and documentation requirements are met.

To qualify for services under the WIOA Adult program, participants must:

- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Be authorized to work in the United States
- Registered for Selective Service (if male, if applicable); and
- Meet one or more of the following priority criteria:
 - Low-income individuals;
 - Veteran or spouse of a Veteran
 - Individuals who are basic skills deficient;
 - Individuals who are justice-impacted.

Participants may also be eligible under the Dislocated Worker program if they:

- Have been laid off or terminated and are eligible for or have exhausted unemployment compensation;
- Have received notice of a layoff or plant closure;
- Are displaced homemakers;
- Are self-employed but unemployed due to economic conditions;
- Are long-term unemployed individuals.

Performance and Deliverables

Service providers must be able to track and report on:

- Number of participants enrolled;

- Number of participants placed in transitional jobs;
- Number transitioned to unsubsidized employment;
- Employment retention in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit;
- Earnings and wage gains;
- Participant and employer satisfaction.

All data must be reported in accordance with SCPa Works' performance management protocols, the Commonwealth Workforce Development System requirements, and WIOA data requirements.

Regional Labor Market Data and Priority Industries

Service providers should align proposed transitional job placements with high-priority occupations identified by SCPa Works, particularly those that reflect current employer demand and long-term career pathways. Key regional labor market factors include:

- Justice involvement is most concentrated in Dauphin, York, and Franklin Counties, where reentry populations and employer engagement are critical (Franklin County Government, 2025; County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, 2021; Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, 2023).
- Perry, Juniata, and Adams Counties present significant rural access barriers, including limited public transportation, few nearby training providers, and broadband gaps. These challenges require flexible and creative service delivery models to effectively reach and support participants in these areas.
- High-demand industries across the South Central region include healthcare, manufacturing, logistics and warehousing, skilled trades, and human services, as identified in SCPa Works' regional labor market analysis (SCPa Works Labor Market Information).

Programs should be responsive to both regional workforce needs and participant interests, ensuring that transitional job placements serve as a meaningful bridge toward long-term employment. Transitional jobs do not have to occur exclusively in the same industry that participants ultimately pursue, but the jobs should build transferable skills, such as reliability, communication, teamwork, and digital literacy, that align with the region's high-priority sectors.

SCPa Works encourages models where transitional jobs are strategically aligned with participants' career goals whenever possible. For example, a participant interested in healthcare might be placed in a front-desk support role at a clinic to gain workplace readiness skills while preparing to enter training or unsubsidized work in that sector.

Employer input is required, and proposals must include letters of support or intent to hire. While service providers are expected to play a lead role in developing employer relationships, SCPa Works and local PA CareerLink® sites will support connections with interested businesses where appropriate.

The selected service provider will be responsible for participant recruitment and outreach. Support will be provided by SCPa Works, PA CareerLink®, and regional partners, who will assist with referrals, promotional efforts, and outreach strategies. Service providers should propose a recruitment plan tailored to their target county or population.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include community-based organizations, workforce service providers, training providers, and post-secondary institutions. Service providers may apply as:

- A single organization delivering all required services;
- A lead agency coordinating with partners or subcontractors; or
- A consortium of entities working together to deliver comprehensive programming

SCPa Works is committed to equity and regional responsiveness. Depending on organizational capacity and local community needs, service providers may propose to serve the entire region or target specific counties. SCPa Works may select a single service provider or multiple service providers based on geographic coverage, total cost, population focus, and program quality.

Required Partnerships

Strong partnerships are essential to the success of this program. service provider(s) must demonstrate:

- Formal agreements (MOUs or letters of support) from at least three employers in targeted industries;
- Collaboration with County Reentry Coalitions, PA CareerLink® sites, and other relevant Community-Based Organizations;
- Referral linkages to key wraparound services such as housing assistance, drug and alcohol treatment, and adult education providers.

Service Provider Qualifications

All applicants must demonstrate the following:

- Proven experience delivering workforce development or transitional jobs programs specifically for justice-impacted individuals;
- Familiarity with the demographics and employer landscape across SCPa Works' eight-county region;
- Knowledge of WIOA-funded programming and eligibility processes;
- A strong network of existing employers and community partnerships;
- The capacity to track, report, and evaluate participant outcomes and program impact.

Project Budget

SCPa Works will operate this program under a cost reimbursement model. This means service providers will be reimbursed for allowable, actual, and documented expenses incurred while delivering services. No funds will be provided in advance.

Proposers must submit a detailed line-item budget and accompanying budget narrative that clearly outlines the anticipated costs of delivering the proposed Transitional Jobs program.

The total available funding for this program is up to \$150,000. SCPa Works may award the full amount to a single proposer or divide funds among multiple proposers.

Budgets should reflect necessary and reasonable costs required to operate a high-quality, compliant program. The budget should be broken down by major cost categories, which may include but are not limited to:

- Personnel: Salaries and wages for staff directly involved in program operations
- Fringe Benefits: Associated costs such as health insurance, payroll taxes, etc.
- Participant Wages/Stipends: Compensation for paid work experience or training participation
- Supportive Services: Transportation, childcare, translation services, or other assistance to remove barriers for participants
- Instructional Materials and Supplies: Curriculum resources, assessment tools, and other educational/training materials
- Technology and Equipment: Laptops, hotspots, software licenses, or virtual learning tools necessary to support remote or in-person learning
- Facilities and Utilities: Costs associated with operating physical sites, if not covered elsewhere
- Administrative/Indirect Costs: A clearly defined indirect cost rate or flat amount, if applicable

Proposers should also include a total cost per participant, based on estimated enrollment and expenditures, to help SCPa Works assess the proposed model's cost-effectiveness.

The budget narrative should provide justification for each cost listed in the line-item budget. It must describe:

- How each cost supports the delivery of the Transitional Jobs program;
- The basis for cost calculations (e.g., hourly rates, participant numbers, duration of services);
- Any shared costs with other programs or leveraged funds (e.g., WIOA Title II, employer contributions).

SCPa Works will review budgets for cost-effectiveness, financial reasonableness, and alignment with program outcomes. Proposals that demonstrate effective use of funds while maximizing participant impact will be prioritized. In-kind contributions are not required but recommended. Please outline these in the proposed budget.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Responsive platform by 9/5/25. Late submissions will not be considered. Questions about this RFQ must be submitted via the Responsive platform. SCPa Works reserves the right to fund one or multiple proposals based on available resources and community need.

To be considered, a proposal must meet all of the criteria set forth in Responsive.

Failure to address all requirements of this RFQ or to follow the instructions provided may result in the proposal not being accepted for consideration.

The selected service provider(s) are required to comply with all state and federal workplace guidance, etc., in relation to allowable expenses included in the cost principles detailed in 2 CFR 200, Subpart E.

Proposal Review

Proposals shall be reviewed and evaluated by SCPa Works' staff based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated ability and expertise in content areas as identified in this RFQ;
- Qualifications and experience of the respondent in providing support for key functions;
- The extent to which the proposal addresses the goals of this RFQ and clearly describes the Scope of Work;
- Proposed project cost; and
- SCPa Works values the experiences and expertise of those with lived experience. The proposing organization's ability to demonstrate these same values in the submitted proposal will be prioritized.
- Information is provided in the proposal questions.

Award of Contract

Each respondent submitting a proposal will be notified by e-mail of SCPa Works' decision concerning the proposal. Formal notification to award a contract and the actual execution of a contract are subject to the following conditions:

- Receipt of funds from administering agencies;
- Results of negotiations between the selected service provider and SCPa Works management;
- Continued availability of SCPa Works funds; and
- Approval by SCPa Works Board.

Proposal Questions

1. Describe the organization's experience serving justice-impacted individuals and managing workforce development or transitional job programs. Include staff qualifications and past performance outcomes. Please include whether the organization has previously managed state or federal grants/programs. (10%)
2. Outline the organization's transitional jobs model, including recruitment, training wage structure, employer involvement, case management, and any innovative elements such as digital literacy or mentorship. Include what a participant's journey would look like from start to finish. (40%)
3. Identify the organization's employer and community partners. Include their roles and attach MOUs or letters of support. (15%)
4. Provide a detailed line-item budget and a narrative that justifies all requested funds using the attached Budget Form. (25%)
5. Describe a workforce barrier in one or more counties the organization intends to serve and how the organization's model addresses that barrier, using local data or stakeholder input. (10%)