

Nebraska VR Request for Proposals
Transition Summer Program
Release date: December 18, 2018
Submission deadline: January 30, 2019

Intent

Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) in conjunction with the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Special Education requests proposals for the development and implementation of innovative short-term programs to provide career exploration and personal development opportunities for transition students with disabilities during the summer of 2019. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandates that VR agencies set aside 15% of their budgets for pre-employment transition services. One of several initiatives in the area of pre-employment transition services includes this RFP. **Funding is contingent on the availability of federal dollars.** Nebraska VR intends to contract with a limited number of qualified applicants for a period up to 5 months (April 2019– August, 2019) to develop and implement Pre-Employment Transition Services for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities, aged 14-21 years enrolled in school during the 2019-2020 school year. As the state-federal vocational rehabilitation program, Nebraska VR maintains a dual customer approach, helping individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment while helping businesses recruit, train and retain employees with disabilities.

Request for Proposal Schedule

Notice of Request for Proposals: 12/18/2018

Pre-proposal Meeting in-person at Lincoln Nebraska VR office and by videoconference from all Nebraska VR offices across the state: 1/8/2019, 1 PM-2 PM Central Time (list of sites attached)

Proposal Due Date: 1/30/2019 @ 5 PM Central Time

Notification of Selected Proposals: 2/12/2019

A signed contract will be required for all proposals before services can begin. All proposed services must be provided within the contract dates. No expenses will be paid for outside of contract dates including preparation costs.

Qualified Applicants

Any Nebraska agency, business or organization with either non-profit or for-profit status with experience in providing services to individuals with significant disabilities is eligible to submit a proposal. Applicants must demonstrate they are able to deliver community-based, culturally competent services in environments accessible to individuals with physical, mental, and sensory impairments. Applicants must assure compliance with the Standard Addenda to NDE Contract.

Targeted Population, Service Area and Definition

The goal of the Transition Summer Program is to develop innovative programs across the state using best practices to provide opportunities for career exploration, employment preparation, and work experiences using such techniques as short-term internships, job shadowing, and hands-on learning activities for students with disabilities, to increase the likelihood of successfully transitioning to competitive integrated employment. According to the Nebraska Department of Education, and based on the history of the last several years, there are approximately 13,700 students aged 14 to 21 years verified for special education services and approximately of 3,200

students under Section 504 plans. Other students with disabilities who are not served under an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a section 504 plan can also be included in the Transition Summer Programs.

Nebraska VR intends to contract with several qualified applicants for a period up to 5 months to develop and implement Pre-Employment Transition Services for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities, aged 14-21 years enrolled in school during the 2019-2020 school year. All students who participate in programs must have a signed Nebraska VR Pre-Employment Transition Services Consent and Release Form or have applied for Nebraska VR services prior to the beginning of the Summer Transition Program. Students who have applied for VR services, been determined eligible, and are on a waiting list for VR services due to an Order of Selection, are not eligible unless Pre-Employment Transition Services were initiated prior to the application to Nebraska VR. Services delivered during the contract period (which cannot extend beyond August 31, 2019) shall capture each participant's growth and the program outcomes as an aggregate in the final Outcomes Measure Report. The program budget cannot exceed \$49,000.00 per award during the contract period. The program budget per award is based upon available funds.

Nebraska VR is seeking proposals to provide one or more of the following pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities age 14-21 during the summer of 2019 during school vacation:

1. Job Exploration Counseling. Examples of eligible activities include job shadowing, workplace site visits, interest and/or career inventories, exploration of relevant career fields and potential jobs, and learning about career opportunities.
2. Work-based Learning Experiences. Examples of eligible activities include work opportunities, paid or unpaid internships, obtaining transferable skills, and summer employment provided in an integrated setting.
3. Workplace Readiness Training. Possible activities include training to develop interpersonal skills, independent living skills and leadership abilities. This could include managing disclosure and how to request accommodations, instruction in employability skills and transportation training.
4. Postsecondary Training/College Exploration, Preparation and Planning Services. This includes postsecondary readiness training to develop social and independent living skills to facilitate transition of students with disabilities into post-secondary education to improve the likelihood of successful post-secondary experience.
5. Instruction in Self Advocacy. Possible activities include training on how to identify positive supports, how to self advocate independently as well as in the presence of support.

Proposals should outline the goal of the proposed activity, the number of students with disabilities to be provided services, the proposed service area, and the projected time period of the proposed services. For example: *The goal of the program is to provide students with disabilities living in Lancaster County job/career exploration counseling. Twenty students with autism, who will be entering their last year of high school in the fall, will be provided services between the start date of April 1, 2019 and the end date of August 31, 2019. Students will be expected to increase their knowledge of current labor market needs and career opportunities in their community. In addition, 50% of the students participating will job shadow in a career selected after a review of information from the job/career exploration counseling.*

Proposals will also be accepted that:

- A. Address training or instruction to Nebraska VR counselors, educators and family members supporting students with disabilities.
- B. Develop and improve strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently and prepare to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment.

Review Criteria and Selection Process

Applicant proposals must meet or exceed requirements described in this RFP. Review team members will evaluate and score submitted proposals using the attached *Transition Summer Program RFP Scoring Sheet*. Questions about this RFP will be addressed at the pre-proposal meeting.

All proposals will be evaluated using the same criteria and scoring process. Nebraska VR will evaluate proposals on a variety of quantitative criteria and reserves full discretion to determine the competence and responsibility, professionally and/or financially of all vendors. All assignment of points shall be at the sole discretion of Nebraska VR. Nebraska VR has the sole right to select the successful vendor(s) for award, as a result of this RFP, after which a contract will be executed.

Proposal and Budget Narrative Instructions

Applicant proposals should present information in the following order:

1. Proposal Narrative: a description of the goal of the proposed activity and/or service(s), the number of students with disabilities to be provided services, the proposed service area, and the projected time period of the proposed services. (30 points)
2. Personnel: include a brief overview of the organization and the experience and qualifications of key personnel involved in the activity or service(s). (15 points)
3. Work Plan: include a clear and realistic work plan with estimated timelines for all service development and implementation activities for the proposed Pre-Employment Transition Services. (20 points)
4. Coordination of Services/Evaluation: describe the process for coordinating with Nebraska VR staff on student referral and progress reporting activities. Describe the measures to be used to track and evaluate whether the proposed goal and objectives were met. Include an assurance of the applicant's ability to comply with the general responsibilities listed under the attached Terms, Conditions and Assurances of the contract. (15 points)
5. Budget Narrative: describe an appropriate and realistic budget for all activities. Include clear and concise justifications for expenses for the full time period of the proposal. If funds from other sources will be leveraged, describe those partnerships or resources. (20 points)

In addition to the budget narrative, provide a line item budget using the following categories:

- * Personnel (Salaries, wages and fringe benefits for each individual working on the project)
- * Student Wages, if applicable (including FICA, worker's comp., etc.)
- * Equipment (if necessary for curriculum delivery)
- * Travel expenses (for staff for the purposes of curriculum delivery)
- * Supplies (list separately with itemized costs)
- * Other and/or indirect expenses (rent, utilities, printing, postage, etc.)
- * Total amount requested

Please note that food (unless related to curriculum delivery) and travel expenses for students, and 1:1 worksite skills trainer support for students involved in work based learning experiences cannot be included in the contract.

Submittal Instructions

- Submit an electronic copy with a signed cover letter via email with any supporting documentation by 5:00 pm Central Time on January 30, 2019 to Cinda Wacker, Nebraska VR at cinda.wacker@nebraska.gov.
- All proposals should be submitted under a subject title: Nebraska VR RFP: 2019 Transition Summer Program.
- Proposals should be written in 12 point font and double spaced with a maximum of 10 pages.

Attachments

- *Standard Addenda to NDE Contract*
- *Transition Summer Program RFP Scoring Sheet*
- *List of Nebraska VR offices statewide*