

**Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training
State Workforce Investment Office**

Request for Proposal

**Using the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)
To Measure Customer Satisfaction under the
Workforce Investment Act of 1998**

State Workforce Investment Office

Request for Proposals **(RFP)**

I. Proposal Requested

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires States to collect and report to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) selected post-program data for the participant and employer universe served under the WIA program.

Accordingly, the State Workforce Investment Office (SWIO) is seeking proposals from appropriate agencies for follow-up analysis based on terminatee information that will be provided from a State database. The services to be provided will include telephone interviews, computerizing data, analyzing results and development of quarterly and annual reports. Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the proposer's experience in conducting follow-up for federally funded programs, adherence to bid specifications, technique, response rates, format and cost.

The proposer should have the ability to electronically accept data and to return similar data to the SWIO.

II. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative should explain how the proposer will provide the services requested through this RFP. The narrative should also demonstrate the proposer's experience and ability to compile and provide the survey research work as required. All information presented should be factual and should respond to the proposal content specifications.

To the extent possible, the narrative should convey to the reader that the proposer understands the approach to be followed in order to provide the research work as required.

III. Contract Period of Performance

The contract period of performance will be for services provided for WIA customers served from January to December with all deliverables due by August 30th of the following year. The deliverable period will include four quarterly reports and one annual report. The contract will be for 2 deliverables periods covering January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012 (deliverables period 1) and January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 (deliverables period 2) with an option for the State Workforce Investment Office to extend the period of performance by two 24-month (2 deliverables) periods. The vendor's contract period of performance will commence upon execution of a contract and issuance of a Purchase Order Number.

IV. Bid Specification

A. Participant and Employer Universe

1) Workforce Investment Act Customers

- (a) The participant universe is described as all WIA Title I-B participants with a last expected service date—also referred to as “closure date”. As defined in TEGL 17-05 and in order to be consistent, the exit date will be used to determine when to include a participant in the sampling. WIA Title I-B participants include individuals who are either adults, dislocated workers, older youth (ages 19-21), and younger youth (ages 14-18).**
- (b) The employer universe includes employers who received a substantial service where the service has been completed or, if it is an ongoing service, when a full segment of service has been provided. All employers who received a substantial service involving personal contact with WIA staff are eligible to be chosen for inclusion in the random sample. Examples of substantial services include staff facilitated job orders, customized job training, customized labor market information requests, and on-the-job-training activities.**
- (c) Approximately 1000 participant and 1200 employer records will be transmitted for each WIA program year.**

B. Survey Parameters:

1) Introduction:

To meet the customer satisfaction measurement requirements of WIA, the proposer will use customer satisfaction surveys. The survey approach captures common customer satisfaction information that can be aggregated and compared at the State and national level. This will be done through the use of a small set of required questions that form a customer satisfaction index. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) will be used, which is created by combining scores from three specific questions that address different dimensions of customers' experience. There will be one score for each of the two customer groups: participants and employers.

NOTE: TEGL 36-10 issued June 27, 2011 could cause this RFP to become null and void if USDOL decides to use other survey tools for WIA customer satisfaction measures.

2) Survey Guidance (Methodology):

The surveys must comply with the methodology provided in TEGL 17-05. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- (a) A letter in advance of the survey should be sent out informing customers to expect to receive a telephone call about satisfaction with services received. Phone numbers should be included in the letter, suggesting that customers call if they need help or call if phone numbers have changed.
- (b) Responses must be collected by way of telephone interviews. In-person interviews and mail questionnaires may be used only in situations where the individual does not have a telephone.
- (c) Participants should be contacted as soon as possible after the date of exit and no later than 60 days after the exit date.
- (d) Employers should be contacted as soon as possible after the completion of the service and no later than 60 days after the completion of the service. For employers who listed a job order where no referrals were made, contact should occur 30 to 60 days after the job was listed.
- (e) Attempts must be made to contact all customers eligible to participate in the survey. A minimum of five follow-up attempts is required, involving various times of the day before closing the record.
- (f) A minimum of 500 participant and 500 employer surveys must be completed during each program year to accurately assess performance on the ACSI.
- (g) The minimum response rate is 70%. The response rate is calculated as the number of respondents with *complete* customer satisfaction information divided by the number included in the sampling. A survey is considered *complete* where valid answers are provided by respondents for each of the three core questions regarding overall satisfaction.
- (h) Every precaution must be taken to prevent a response bias.
- (i) Respondents must be told that responding to the survey is voluntary.
- (j) The interview should be limited to 15 minutes or less.
- (k) Surveys need to be conducted on an ongoing basis.

3) Additional Questions

The SWIO may request additional questions be added from time to time. The proposer must provide a basis of cost for additional questions and submit that information with this proposal. The proposer is also asked to submit a list of suggested additional questions and indicate the additional costs and time involved.

4) Contract Data Periods

Participant and employer data eligible for surveying will be forwarded to the Vendor on a monthly basis for the periods January to December beginning with WIA program year 2012. Cumulative quarterly vendor data reporting will be aligned with the USDOL performance reporting timeframes as follows: January – March results due November of each calendar year; January – June results due February of each calendar year; January – September results due May of each calendar year; and January – December results due August of each calendar year.

5) Core Interview:

Participants

[Introductory Script]

My name is (interviewer) with (firm or agency) and I am conducting a survey for the (program name). I would like to speak to Ms./Mr. (name of participant).

Are you the Ms./Mr. (name of participant) who received a (name of service(s)) from the (program name) on (date or date range)? [IF THE RESPONDENT CONFIRMS PARTICIPATION, PROCEED WITH THE INTERVIEW. IF NO, END THE INTERVIEW AND THANK THE RESPONDENT FOR HIS OR HER TIME.]

I would like to ask you some questions about your recent experience with the services provided to you. Our purpose is to learn from you how to improve programs and services offered to people. The survey was approved by the Office of Management and Budget under OMB Control No. 1205-0420, expiring 12/31/2012 to collect information on your experience with services we provide to individuals. Without this approval, we would not be able to conduct this survey. The questionnaire is voluntary and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Please know the answers you provide to my questions will be kept confidential. If you have any questions regarding this estimate or any other aspect of this data collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden, send them to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Performance and Technology, Room S-4231, Washington, D.C. 20210 (Paperwork Reduction Project 1205-0420). Do you have any questions for me before we start the interview? [IF NO, CONTINUE. IF YES, PROBE TO UNDERSTAND THE QUESTIONS, PROVIDE ANSWERS AND RESTATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESPONDENT’S PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERVIEW.]

[The Questions]

First, I want you to rate your overall experience with the services. I will read to you three statements and ask you to rate your experience.

1) Utilizing a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “Very Dissatisfied” and “10” means “Very Satisfied” what is your overall satisfaction with the services provided from _____?

Very Dissatisfied										Very Satisfied	Don't Know	Refused to Answer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

2) Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the services, to what extent have the services met your expectations? “1” now means “Falls Short of Your Expectations” and “10” means “Exceeds Your Expectations.”

Falls Short of Expectations										Exceeds Expectations	Don't Know	Refused to Answer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

3) Now think of the ideal program for people in your circumstances. How well do you think the services you received compare with the ideal set of services? “1” now means “Not very close to the Ideal” and “10” means “Very Close to the Ideal.”

Not Close To Ideal										Very Close To Ideal	Don't Know	Refused to Answer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

Employers

[Introductory Script]

My name is (interviewer) with (firm or agency) and I am conducting a survey for the (program name). I would like to speak to Ms./Mr. (name of employer contact).

Are you the Ms./Mr. (name of contact) who received a (name of service(s)) from the (program name) on (date or date range)? [IF THE RESPONDENT CONFIRMS PARTICIPATION, PROCEED WITH THE INTERVIEW. IF NO, END THE INTERVIEW AND THANK THE RESPONDENT FOR HIS OR HER TIME.]

I would like to ask you some questions about your recent experience with the services provided to your business. Our purpose is to learn from you how to improve programs and services offered to area businesses. The survey was approved by the Office of Management and Budget under OMB Control No. 1205-0420, expiring 12/31/2012 to collect information on your experience with services we provide to employers. Without this approval, we would not be able to conduct this survey. The questionnaire is voluntary and should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

Please know the answers you provide to my questions will be kept confidential. If you have any questions regarding this estimate or any other aspect of this data collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden, send them to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Performance and Technology, Room S-4231, Washington, D.C. 20210 (Paperwork Reduction Project 1205-0420). Do you have any questions for me before we start the interview? [IF NO, CONTINUE. IF YES, PROBE TO UNDERSTAND THE QUESTIONS, PROVIDE ANSWERS AND RESTATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESPONDENT’S PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERVIEW.]

[The Questions]

First, I want you to rate your overall experience with the services. I will read to you three statements and ask you to rate your experience.

1) Utilizing a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “Very Dissatisfied” and “10” means “Very Satisfied” what is your overall satisfaction with the services provided from _____?

Very Dissatisfied										Very Satisfied	Don't Know	Refused to Answer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

2) Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the services, to what extent have the services met your expectations? “1” now means “Falls Short of Your Expectations” and “10” means “Exceeds Your Expectations.”

Falls Short of Expectations										Exceeds Expectations	Don't Know	Refused to Answer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

3) Now think of the ideal program for people in your circumstances. How well do you think the services you received compare with the ideal set of services? “1” now means “Not very close to the Ideal” and “10” means “Very Close to the Ideal.”

Not Close To Ideal										Very Close To Ideal	Don't Know	Refused to Answer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

6) Calculation of the ACSI:

The ACSI scores represent the weighted sum of the three ACSI questions' values which are transformed into “0” to “100” scale values. The weights are applied to each of the three questions to account for differences in the characteristics of the State's customer groups. Specific weighting factors have been developed for each State. New weighting factors will be published annually. *(Refer to TEGl 36-10 for the most recent ACSI Table of Weights)*

7) Reporting:

- (a) Cumulative quarterly data will be required that contains the customer satisfaction raw data and analysis for each of the "Core Questions." The reports will indicate the total number eligible for survey by population and workforce investment area, the response rate, the number of completed surveys, the number included in the sample and the appropriate analysis of the resulting ACSI scores. *[Refer to 4) Contract Data Periods for reporting timeframes.]*

- (b) Cumulative quarterly reports will be due to the SWIO no later than 90 days following the end of the federal reporting periods (September 30, December 31, March 31, and June 30). Reports will be due NLT December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30.
- (c) An Annual Report will be required no later than 120 days (4 months) following the end of the federal reporting period (June 30). The Annual Report will be due NLT October 31.
- (d) The proposer should be prepared to present the Annual Report to the SWIO and to local operators at a prearranged meeting of all parties.
- (e) The proposer should have the capability to electronically archive client responses to all questions and to transmit them to the State in an electronic format as requested.

8) Proposal Costs:

Proposer's WIA Budget:

A proposed budget must be submitted with cost justified in terms of activities related specifically to the core questions and major related expenditures. Specify services and corresponding costs which are to be provided by a subcontractor, consultant, or other organization. The basis of the cost determination must be disclosed, e.g., increased telephone time.

The proposer bid shall be based upon cost per completed survey. The cost per completed survey should be calculated on the minimum requirement of 500 completed surveys for participants and 500 completed surveys for employers.

Cost related to additional or alternative questions must be included with the proposal.

9) Payment:

Payments shall be made following receipt of cumulative quarterly data and be based on a per contract basis. Should less than the required minimum number of surveys be completed, payment would be based on the total number of surveys actually completed within the allowable time frames.

V. Adherence to U.S. Department of Labor Requirements

At a minimum, bidders must utilize and adhere to the requirements set forth in the U.S. Department of Labor's Guides (TEGL 17-05 & 36-10) for States to implement the core and customer satisfaction performance measures under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
Internet Links:

17-05:

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05.pdf>

17-05 Attachments:

http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachA.pdf

http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachB.pdf

http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachC.pdf

http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachD.pdf

http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachE.pdf

36-10:

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL36-10.pdf>

VI. Confidentiality

Participant and employer information is confidential. It is the responsibility of the vendor to limit access to the information generated by the telephone surveying of individual employers and participants. The data records transmitted to the vendor will only be used for the purposes of follow-up interviews with participants and employers under this contract. The vendor must specify that all electronic data files transmitted via e-mail to its employees are secure and guarantee limited access (on a need-to-know basis only.) A confidentiality statement must be included with the proposal.

VII. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The State will commission a Technical Review Committee that will evaluate and score all technical and cost proposals, using the following criteria. The possible maximum score is 100 points. Proposals scored below 60 points will not be considered. The Technical Review Committee will recommend three finalists to the Director of the Department of Labor & Training, who will make the final selection for this requirement. Each proposal will be evaluated on the degree to which the vendor has addressed the following items:

1. Qualifications and Experience (0-40 points)

- **The applicant has demonstrated previous experience conducting follow-up studies for federally funded programs.**
- **The response rates achieved by the applicant in previous studies.**
- **Demonstrated capacity of the applicant to implement a Customer Satisfaction Survey in compliance with federal timelines.**
- **Experience in compiling and presenting the results of survey research work as required.**

2. Proposed Specifications (0-50 points)

- **Ability to provide services including telephone interviews, computerizing data, analyzing results and developing reports.**
- **Method the applicant will use to provide services requested through this RFP is feasible.**
- **Ability to compile and provide the survey research as required.**
- **Indication that the applicant understands the approach that is to be followed.**
- **Applicant's capability to electronically archive client responses and transmit to the State of Rhode Island in an electronic format.**
- **A Confidentiality Statement included with the proposal as required.**

3. Cost (0-10 points)

- **Calculated as the lowest responsive cost proposal divided by this cost proposal times 10 points.**

4. The State reserves the right to award on the basis of cost alone, to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to act in its best interest.

INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERORS:

- **Potential offerors are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.**
- **Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals which depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this Request will be rejected as being non-responsive.**
- **All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content shall be borne by the offeror. The State assumes no responsibility for these costs.**
- **Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the Department of Labor and Training.**
- **All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.**
- **Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Department of Labor and Training at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and may not be considered. The “Official” time clock is in the reception area of the Department of Labor and Training.**
- **In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). This will be a requirement only of the successful bidder(s).**
- **Offerors are advised that all materials submitted to the State of Rhode Island for consideration in response to this Request for Proposals will be considered to be public record, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request, once an award has been made.**
- **It is intended that an award pursuant to this Request will be made to a prime contractor, who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered, but subcontracts are permitted, provided that their use is clearly indicated in the offeror’s proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.**
- **Selection of a bidder for this award does not constitute approval of the application as submitted. Before the actual contract is executed, we may enter into negotiations about such items as staffing and funding levels, etc.**

- **The State reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request or to cancel in part or its entirety this RFP, if it is in the best interest of the State to do so. In addition, the State reserves the right to waive any and all requirements of the RFP.**
- **The State reserves the right not to fund any proposal solely due to the submission of the lowest cost or receipt of the highest ranking. All contract awards are subject to the availability of Federal funds and the execution of a contract that is acceptable to both the selected respondent and the State.**
- **The State of Rhode Island has a goal of ten percent (10%) participation by Minority Business Enterprise's (MBE) in all State procurements. For further information, visit the website www.rimbe.org . To speak with an M.B.E. Officer, call (401) 457-8253.**
- **Any respondent who has submitted a response to this RFP may appeal an award announcement. The process for appealing an award is as follows:**

All protests, appeals or complaints must be submitted in writing to the Department of Labor and Training within five (5) working days of the award announcement addressed to the Administrator of the State Workforce Investment Office for review and to determine merit. In order for an appeal to be found to have merit it must show that a substantial portion of the RFP process or Federal procurement guidelines was violated. Only appeals that cite the specific section(s) of the RFP that have been violated will be considered.

If protests, appeals or complaints are found to have merit, the appeal will be evaluated by the Director of the Department of Labor and Training. The decision made by the Director of DLT will be final.

Appeals received after the established deadline will not be accepted. Appeals may not dispute a particular score received by the petitioning agency, or the scores assigned to a competing agency. The scores awarded are final and are not subject to question by an appealing agency.

- **Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Department of Labor and Training web site on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP.**

Please note that procurement policies mandate that staff of the Department of Labor and Training will not be allowed to discuss the RFP. Questions may be submitted but only written inquiries will be accepted. Questions should be emailed to Paul Genovesi at Pgenovesi@dlt.ri.gov prior to 02/11/2012. All questions and answers will be posted to the DLT website at www.dlt.ri.gov/SWIO.

Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1)

§ 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy. – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies in all areas where the state dollar is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information, contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office, at 222-3090.

PRE-PROPOSAL QUESTIONS & PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Interested parties may submit emailed questions, in accordance with the terms and conditions expressed above, no later than the date and time indicated. Questions received, if any, will be answered and posted on the Department of Labor and Training website as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

Interested offerors may submit proposals to provide the services covered by this Request on or before the deadline for submission posted below on this solicitation. Proposals received after this time and date may not be considered.

The original plus six (6) printed copies of the application in 12-point font, along with one electronic copy of each proposal should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked “Collection of and Reporting of WIA Data” by 02/26/2012 to:

**RI Dept. of Labor & Training
State Workforce Investment Office Bldg. 72-3
1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, RI 02920-4407**

NOTE: Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time will not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other state locations or which are otherwise not presented in the Department of Labor and Training by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and may not be considered. Proposals faxed or emailed to the Department of Labor and Training will not be considered. The official time clock is located in the reception area of the Department of Labor and Training.