



2014

Ready to Work

**Community Based Development Organization
Request for Qualifications**

Introduction

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is seeking qualifications from agencies interested in implementing an ESL and jobs readiness program called *Ready to Work: ESL and Computers*. One agency will be selected and awarded a contract as the Community Based Development Organization (CBDO) to administer, coordinate, and implement *Ready to Work* in conjunction with one or more Community Based Organizations (CBO) and other community partners.

This program will be funded by the Federal Community Development Block Grant Program. To be an eligible CBDO, entities must meet the following criteria:

- Be a non-profit, public corporation, or association organized under State or local law to engage in community development activities primarily within an identified geographic area of operation within the jurisdiction of the recipients;
- Has as its primary purpose, the improvement of the physical, economic or social environment primarily within a neighborhood, area, or region within the city limits of Seattle, but not inclusive of the entire city, with particular attention to the needs of persons of low- and moderate-income;
- Have a Governance/Board Members who are:
 - Nominated and approved by the organization's membership or governing body, and
 - Maintain at least 51 percent of its governing body's membership for:
 - Low- and moderate-income residents of its geographic area of operation,
 - Owners or senior officers of private establishments and other institutions located in and serving its geographic area of operation,
 - or Representatives of low- and moderate-income neighborhood organizations located in its geographic area of operation; and
- Does not permit more than one-third of the membership of its governing body to be appointed by, or to consist of, elected or other public officials or employees or officials of an ineligible entity.

If your organization does not currently have a formal CBDO designation from the City of Seattle and you think you would qualify, please contact:

City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
600 4th Ave, 6th Floor
PO Box 94745
Seattle, WA 98124
OIRA@seattle.gov

The main goals of the Community Based Development Organization are to:

- Provide strategic and management direction to the project
- Ensure alignment and linkages across Community Based Organizations and community partners providing ESL classes, workforce training, social services, and other community networks to address the myriad of institutional, service delivery and personal barriers facing immigrant and refugee populations (e.g., housing, transportation, financial debt and legal obligations).

- Fiscal administration, data tracking and management, and compliance with Community Development Block Grant and other funding requirements.
- Program planning, program management and implementation.

Up to \$400,000 will be awarded through the Community Development Block Grant program for this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process for a 12-month award.

Fund Source

Community Development Block Grant

RFQ Amount

\$400,000

Initial awards will be made for the contract period of ~~January 1, 2015~~ February 9, 2015 to December 31, 2015. Future funding will be contingent upon performance and funding availability.

All materials and updates to this RFQ are available at www.seattle.gov/iandaffairs/readytowork. If you have any questions about the RFQ, please contact Cuc Vu at Cuc.Vu@seattle.gov.

Timeline

The program implementation timeline is estimated as follows:

November 25, 2014 – Request for Qualifications (RFQ) released

~~December 23, 2014~~ January 30, 2015 – Deadline to submit application to OIRA

~~December 31, 2014~~ February 6, 2015– Selection of CBDO and announcement no later than
~~December 31, 2014~~ February 6, 2015

~~January~~ February 2015 – Contract development and negotiations

~~January~~ February to April 2015 – CBDO begins program implementation and management

April 2015 – Launch of *Ready to Work* program

Investment Area Background

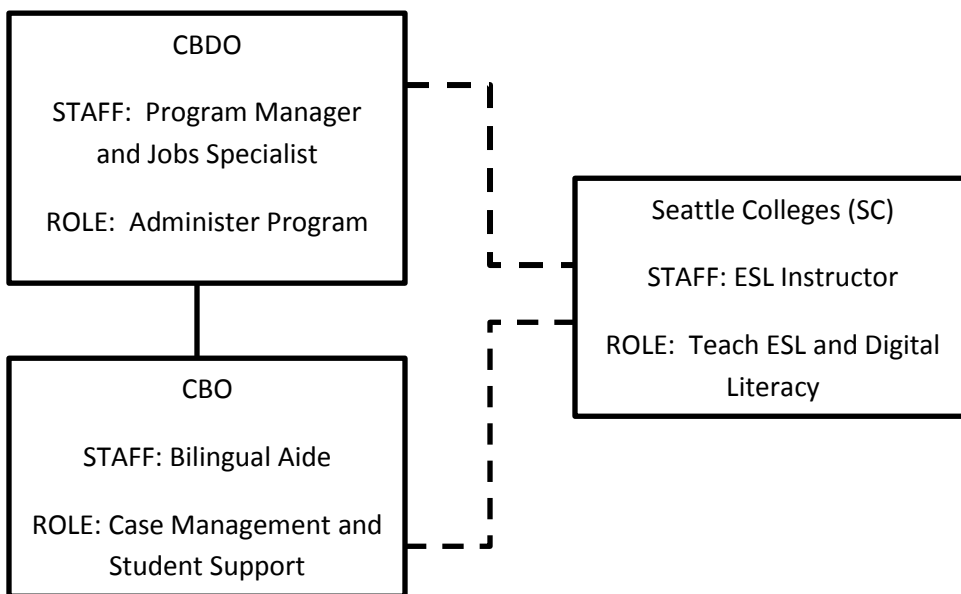
A. BACKGROUND

The program model represents a pathway to jobs and/or training for low- and moderate-income immigrants and refugees who are in the workforce (employed or looking for work), and have limited English proficiency (scoring between levels 1 to 3 on the National Reporting System for Adult Education). It seeks to bridge the gap between (1) established programs such as “Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training” (IBEST) that combine occupational skills training with English language instruction (usually level 3 or higher) at the Community Colleges (SCs) and doubled retention and job placement

rates across the state, and (2) ESL offered in community-based organizations (CBOs) through instruction that tends to focus on civics, life skills, and family literacy.

Recent analysis shows there is a broad gap in programs and services that meet the needs of LEP populations who are unemployed or underemployed. Most current services are targeted either toward survival English and everyday life skills (offered by CBOs) or pre-academic English skills (offered by Community Colleges). Established programs that combine occupational skills training with English language instruction, such as “Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training” (IBEST), usually target English learners with intermediate language competency, level 3 or higher. This program addresses that gap by developing and implementing a practical, work-focused approach to learning English and prepare for training that integrates digital literacy throughout.

The program model uses a collaborative team approach between community partners. The CBDO will administer and manage the program. Seattle Colleges (SCs) will place a trained ESL instructor at a CBO site, where the instructor will teach in partnership with a CBO staffer (a bilingual aide) who lends cross-cultural expertise and offers bilingual support. CBO staff may also teach employability skills related to their knowledge of the local job market and offer student support and case management. A Jobs Specialist (who may be a new hire with supported program dollars or existing staff person) housed in the CBDO will offer active job development while the SC ESL instructor engages students in learning work-related ESL and acquiring digital literacy skills. Collaboration will continue throughout the pathway, helping individuals persist.



B. TARGETED POPULATION

The Ready to Work pathway is designed to meet the language, literacy, and job skill needs of three types of immigrants and refugees at levels 1-3.

1. Type One: Youth and adults who need immediate access to jobs and are only able to spend a short amount of time learning employment-related English.
2. Type Two: Youth and adults in the ESL Level 1-3 group seeking family-sustaining jobs that require occupational skills training focused on a credential.

At least 51% of the recipients of program services must meet HUD's definition of low- or moderate-income (80% of area median income or less). Income qualification statements or certifications for all participants must be obtained and maintained on file for program auditing purposes.

Expected Outcomes

A rigorous evaluation of the program will be part of the program design, beginning in January 2015. Rather than evaluating the program at the end, OIRA will hire an evaluator and conduct a collaborative process to set up an evaluation tool that will be used throughout the program. To develop the evaluation tool, OIRA and the consultant will need to determine what data is already collected by the CBDO, CBOs, Colleges and other stakeholders and what gaps exist. OIRA has identified goals in the following categories:

- Outreach, Orientation, Assessment and Placement
- Learning Outcomes, Persistence, and Transition
- Wraparound Services
- Employer Engagement

At a minimum, the program will serve 80 students and 70% of the students will:

- Complete the course;
- Increase their English proficiency skills as measured by a standardized ESL test;
- Gain jobs readiness training, including being able to use a digital device and apply for a job online;
- Be able to provide personal information face-to-face in an application form;
- Transition either to work, job training (apprenticeship, internship work study or other training), an IBEST program, a workplace-based ESL program or to an additional ESL course; and
- Complete an individual employment and training/education plan.

OIRA Mission

The mission of OIRA is to facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Seattle's civic, economic, and cultural life; celebrate diverse cultures of immigrants and refugees and their contributions to Seattle; advocate on behalf of immigrants and refugees and promote a citywide culture that understands and values the benefits that all members of our society receive when immigrants and refugee communities are successfully integrated into our civic, economic and cultural life.

Scope of Work

COMMUNITY BASED DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION SCOPE OF WORK

Ready to Work is a model that relies on the input and efforts of multiple community partners. The CBDO should be able to provide effective strategic direction, program management and administration as well as create a collaborative environment for community partners and the City to think together and work together in delivering services to participants and sharing practices, challenges and successes. The CBDO will be required to work directly with one or more Community Based Organizations (CBO) and Seattle Colleges to ensure program implementation. CBDO service components must be delivered by the CBDO. The body of work identified for the CBO and Seattle College partners must be subcontracted out to CBOs and Seattle Colleges.

CBDO SERVICE COMPONENTS

The CBDO will be responsible for the successful implementation of all aspects of the Ready to Work program model as stated below.

Planning and Development

- Establish and staff an advisory body or steering committee to help guide the planning and implementation of the Ready to Work program model
- Develop a detailed budget and set up accounting practices to ensure compliance with funding source

Partner Recruitment, Coordination and Support

- Identify eligible CBOs to deliver program and formalize agreement
- Formalize agreement with Seattle College partner
- Convene planning meetings on program development and solidifying team approach
- Coordinate Ready to Work specific training for partners
- Support CBO as needed in:
 - Accessing wrap-around support and resources as needed– for providing flexible and individualized support to meet barriers, such as housing, transportation, and childcare, and to completing a job training and/or education program

Address ways to overcome other potential significant barriers for participants, such as credit/asset building and LEP support for services

Program Implementation

- Create a hiring committee
- Hire Project Manager dedicated to the Ready to Work program
- Hire Jobs Developer to work with participants at CBOs and to develop employer relationships
- Oversee all aspects of program implementation
- Develop/ensure intake, application, and reporting forms meet funding requirements
- Monitor program delivery including participant enrollment, completion rates, etc.
- Manage all contracts, invoices and payments to partners and vendors
- Support and enforce operational controls and procedures
- Provide administrative and fiduciary oversight of participant support fund

Leverage

- Leverage existing resources to support the program
- Leverage existing relationships with local employers and small businesses to commit to hiring successful participants

Reporting and Evaluation

- Work with an evaluator to build a foundational evaluation system that will be incorporated into the program model
- Support evidence-based data collection by partners and manage data
- Comply with record keeping and reporting requirements as specified by funding source
- Oversee budget, manage finances, and ensure financial compliance

Desired Capacity and Expertise of CBDO

This RFQ will identify a **single** agency to award the contract to with the proven capacity and experience to carry out the functions outlined under the scope of work. The selected agency will demonstrate their qualifications through responses to the RFQ Application.

- A. Strong linkages to immigrant and refugee communities, with demonstrated track record of partnerships – particularly with community based organizations.
- B. Knowledge and awareness of LEP issues and barriers and service needs.
- C. Experience providing a range of employment and other community services to support employment, career pathways, and stability.
- D. Multi-cultural competency.
- E. Sufficient readiness to implement the program within the timeline proposed in the application.
- F. Good standing with current funders (both public and private).
- G. Ability and system(s) for documenting and evaluating program effectiveness
- H. Ability to comply with complex reporting requirements

- I. History and demonstrated ability to partner with community stakeholders and a variety of mainstream and non-traditional workforce and human service providers.

Agency Eligibility

Applications meeting the requirements of this RFQ will be accepted from any legally constituted entities that meet the following conditions:

Legal Status

- Applicant needs to meet all licensing requirements that apply to its organization. Companies must license, report and pay revenue taxes for the Washington State Business License (UBI#) and Seattle Business License, if they are required by the laws of those jurisdictions.
- Applicant is incorporated as a private non-profit corporation in the State of Washington and has been granted tax-exempt status by the United States Internal Revenue Service, the applicant's tax-exempt status is in good standing and has not been revoked in the previous calendar year.
- Applicant must have a Federal Tax ID number/employer identification number (EIN) to facilitate payments from the City of Seattle to the provider.

Mission/Purpose

- An association or corporation organized under State or local law to engage in community development activities primarily within a neighborhood, area, or region within the city limits of Seattle, but not inclusive of the entire city; and
- Has as its primary purpose the improvement of the physical, economic or social environment of its geographic area of operation by addressing one or more critical problems of the area, with particular attention to the needs of persons of low and moderate income.

Governance/Board

Members must be nominated and approved by the organization's membership or governing body. At least 51 percent of its governing body's membership must comprise:

- Low- and moderate-income residents of its geographic area of operation,
- Owners or senior officers of private establishments and other institutions located in and serving its geographic area of operation, or
- Representatives of low- and moderate-income neighborhood organizations located in its geographic area of operation.

Does not permit more than one-third of the membership of its governing body to be appointed by, or to consist of, elected or other public officials or employees or officials of an ineligible entity.

Client Data and Program Reporting Requirements

Applicants must be able to collect and report client-level demographic and service data as stated in the contract. Applicants must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases.

Applicants funded through this RFQ will be required to report client-level data, program services/activities, unduplicated numbers of households assisted, and program outcomes in a pre-approved data management system as a condition of funding.

Contracting Requirements

- Any contract resulting from this RFQ will be between OIRA and the applicant agency.
- Contracts may be amended to ensure that services and outcomes align with the community needs or due to availability of funding.
- OIRA will attach Exhibits and Attachments to all resulting contracts which will further specify program terms, rules, requirements, guidelines and procedures.
- Contractors will be required to maintain books, records, documents, and other evidence directly related to performance of the work in accordance with Generally Acceptable Accounting Procedures. The City of Seattle, the Washington State Auditor's Office, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access to such books, records and documents for inspection, audit, and copying for a period of seven (7) years after completion of work.
- Contractors must complete all required reports and billing documentation as stated in the contract. Reimbursement will be contingent upon receipt and approval of required reports. Additional data may be required for audit or evaluation purposes.
- All programs funded through this RFQ must publicly recognize OIRA's contribution to the program.
- Contractors will maintain a public liability insurance policy with a minimum limit of \$1,000,000, naming the City of Seattle as insured.
- Contractors must have the capacity to protect and maintain all confidential information gained by reason of this contract against unauthorized use, access, disclosure, modification or loss.
- Contracts must be able to collect and report data as described in Section IX.

Selection Process & Criteria

This RFQ process is competitive. All interested parties must submit a complete application packet to be considered for funding. All completed applications turned in by the deadline that meet the minimum eligibility qualifications are reviewed and individually scored by members of the review committee. The review committee reserves the right to request site visits. Together as a group, the review committee will forward their funding recommendation to the OIRA Director. Notification of awards will be sent to the Executive Director of the applicant agency.

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Strong linkages to immigrant and refugee communities, with demonstrated track record of partnerships.
2. Knowledge and awareness of employment and service barriers for ESL adults.
3. Experience providing a range of services to support the needs of immigrants and refugees, including housing, employment and long-term stability.
4. Multi-cultural competency.
5. Sufficient readiness to implement the program within the tie line proposed in the application.
6. Good standing with current funders.
7. Ability and system(s) for documenting and evaluating program effectiveness.
8. Historic and demonstrated ability to partner with community stakeholders and a variety of mainstream and non-traditional workforce and human service providers.

OIRA reserves the right to make award without further discussion of the application submitted. Therefore, the application should be submitted on the most favorable terms. If the application is selected for funding, applicants should be prepared to accept the proposed terms for incorporation into a contract resulting from this RFQ.

OIRA also reserves all rights not expressly stated in the RFQ, including making no awards or awarding partial funding and negotiating with any proposer regarding the funding amount and other terms of any contract resulting from this RFQ.

Appeal Process

An applicant is any legal entity that has responded to a formal funding process Request for Investments (RFI), Request for Qualifications (RFQ), Request for Proposals (RFP), Letter of Interest/Intent (LOI), bid requests, notice of funding availability or similar process conducted by the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) in soliciting applications for the provision of defined services. Applicants have the right to protest or appeal certain decisions in the award process made by OIRA.

Grounds for Appeals:

Only an appeal alleging an issue concerning the following subjects shall be considered:

- A matter of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest;
- Errors in computing scores;
- Violation of policies or guidelines established in the funding opportunity; and/or
- Failure to adhere to published criteria and/or procedures.

Appeals Deadlines:

1. OIRA will notify all applicants in writing of the status of their application. For awarded applications, if appropriate, the level of funding to be allocated will be stated.

2. Within ten business days from the date of the written notification by OIRA, the applicant may submit a written appeal to the OIRA Director.
3. The OIRA Director will review the written appeal and may request additional oral or written information from the appellant organization. A written decision of the OIRA Director will be made within ten business days of the receipt of the appeal. The OIRA Director's decision is final.
4. No contracts resulting from the solicitation may be finalized until the appeal process has closed. An appeal may not prevent OIRA from issuing an interim contract for services to meet critical client needs.

Appeals Form and Content:

A notice to OIRA staff that an applicant intends to appeal does not reserve the right to an appeal. The applicant must actually file an appeal within the required deadline and follow the proper format. A casual inquiry, complaint, or an appeal that does not provide the facts and issues, and/or does not comply with the form, content or deadline herein, will not be considered by the Department or acted upon as an appeal.

All appeals shall be in writing and state that the applicant is submitting a formal appeal. Deliveries by hand, mail, e-mail or fax are acceptable methods. OIRA is not responsible to assure an appeal is received within the appeals deadlines. If OIRA staff does not receive the appeal by the deadline, the protest can be rejected.

Address the appeal to:

Cuc Vu, Director
Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
600 4th Ave, 6th Floor
P.O. Box 94745
Seattle, WA 98124-4745
E-mail: Cuc.Vu@seattle.gov

Include the following information and any other additional information you want considered in your appeal letter. Failure to provide the following information can result in rejection of your appeal if the materials are not sufficient for OIRA to adequately consider the nature of your appeal:

1. Agency name, mailing address, phone number and name of individual responsible for submission of the appeal;
2. Specify the funding opportunity title;
3. State the specific action or decision you are appealing;
4. Indicate the basis for the appeal including specific facts;
5. Indicate what relief or corrective action you believe OIRA should make;

6. Demonstrate that you made every reasonable effort within the funding process schedule to resolve the issue, including asking questions, attending information sessions, seeking clarification, and otherwise alerting OIRA to any perceived problems; and
7. Signed by the Agency's Executive Director or similar level agency management staff.

Appeals Process:

The OIRA Director will review the appeal. All available facts will be considered and the OIRA Director shall issue a final decision. This decision shall be delivered in writing by email, fax, or mailed letter to the individual making the appeal and the Agency's Executive Director or similar level agency management staff who signed the appeal.

Each written determination of the appeal shall:

1. Find the appeal lacking in merit and uphold the City action; or
2. Find only immaterial or harmless errors in OIRA's funding process and therefore reject the appeal; or
3. Find merit in the appeal and proceed with appropriate action, which may include but is not limited to rejecting all intended awardees or re-tabulating scores.

If OIRA finds the appeal without merit, OIRA may continue with the funding process (contractual execution). Even if the appeal is determined to have merit, OIRA may issue an interim contract for services to meet critical client needs. Nothing herein shall diminish the authority of OIRA to enter into a contract, whether an appeal action or intention to appeal has been issued or otherwise.