



CITY OF BOSTON WORKER EMPOWERMENT CABINET

Request for Proposals
Career Awareness in the Life Sciences Issue
Date: March 31, 2023
Proposals Due: May 5, 2023
Inquiries: sarah.soroui@boston.gov

Michelle Wu, Mayor
Trinh Nguyen, Chief of Worker Empowerment

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RFP TIMELINE

| | |
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| Request for Proposals Issued Website: boston.gov/owd-grantmaking | March 31, 2023 |
| Submittal of Questions E-mail: sarah.soroui@boston.gov | April 28, 2023, by 5:00 PM |
| Response to RFP Due | May 5, 2023, by 5:00 PM |
| Notification of Selection | June 2, 2023, by 5:00 PM |
| Anticipated Contract Start Date | July 1, 2023 |

Section I. OVERVIEW

Boston is the nation's most active hub for life sciences and biotechnology, often described as the "Silicon Valley of biotech." In March of 2022, Bloomberg News reported that Boston had surpassed the Bay Area in lab science space under construction. An August 2021 Workforce Analysis Report from the regional industry association, MassBio, determined a short-term need for up to 40,000 new workers by 2024; and, to give a sense of scope: life sciences development projects represent over 50 million new square footage of Boston's space (based on current data from the Boston Planning and Development Agency's projects that have been approved or undergoing the approval process).

In a moment of unprecedented growth in Boston's life sciences ecosystem, a key challenge is ensuring that Boston residents, particularly those from Black and brown communities and historically underserved neighborhoods, can participate in the enormous economic opportunities presented by the industry's success. The lack of connectivity between Black and brown communities in Boston and the life sciences industry significantly exacerbates this problem. Black and brown communities make up just 15% of the industry workforce, despite comprising 32% of the general population. Although many viable career paths in the life sciences require no more than a community college certificate, too few Boston residents have pursued STEM post-secondary training. The demand for workers in the industry outstrips the supply, resulting in a talent shortage at all levels, including for entry-level candidates. Without deliberate action to connect more individuals to jobs in STEM-intensive fields like the life sciences, the skills shortages could inhibit the industry's growth, and many residents will miss the chance to enter family-supporting employment opportunities.

One key challenge contributing to the labor shortage in life sciences, and STEM in general, is a lack of basic awareness of the sector and the career pathways it offers, specifically for residents at the sub-baccalaureate level. This problem is especially acute for people from low-income backgrounds, people of color, English Language Learners, and women, who continue to face systemic barriers in pursuing STEM education and jobs. These barriers include the persistence of gender and racial bias in the industry, a lack of role models for residents from underrepresented communities, and little to no opportunities for residents to be exposed to STEM-related careers and education. An important way to address these barriers is a proactive career awareness campaign that educates residents on the viability and accessibility of career pathways to life sciences employment in the Greater Boston area.

The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (OWD) seeks implementing partners to design and carry out interactive and awareness-raising activities to increase the representation of historically underrepresented groups in life sciences and STEM career pathways, including women, people of color (particularly Black and Latinx residents), and low-income Boston residents. We seek strategies that engage individuals at different life stages—from high school students to working adults—in various settings (schools, employment, community colleges, community-based organizations, etc.). Strategies that engage non-bachelor's degree holders are a priority for this initiative. We are looking for partners that have the ability to provide pre-training support, such as community mobilization and awareness campaigns, career mapping tools, industry exposure opportunities, career exploration programs, or other related services. These services may be provided by the applicant or through a demonstrated partnership with other organizations, including community-based coalitions.

The City of Boston will provide up to a maximum of \$500,000 in funding for the execution of this project. Funding for this project comes from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, federal aid awarded to the city to respond to the public health and economic impact of the public health emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section II. PROJECT SCOPE

The aim of this RFP is to develop an outreach initiative to raise basic awareness of the life sciences industry, as well as other STEM fields, and the career and educational opportunities available for residents to participate in the industry. We seek high-impact, high-reach education and awareness activities to boost interest in life sciences and STEM subjects and careers, raise awareness of career possibilities, and help individuals prepare for and/or enter pathways to promising careers in these industries. The initiative will work with ongoing work at the City of Boston to build more pathways into the life sciences industry for residents from underrepresented populations, especially those at the sub-baccalaureate level. The elements of this initiative could include, but are not limited to:

- **Collaboration with industry and training partners:** Partnering with businesses and organizations in life sciences to showcase training and career opportunities and provide hands-on experiences through internships, career fairs, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and mentorship.
- **Events and workshops:** Organizing events, workshops, and seminars that focus on life sciences careers that can provide opportunities for individuals to learn more about life sciences occupations, meet professionals in these fields, and get hands-on experience with relevant tools and technologies.
- **Outreach to schools and community-based organizations:** Working with schools and community organizations to provide resources and training on STEM topics, cultivate career-focused instruction and experiences for learners, and host community events that showcase life sciences careers and opportunities.
- **Career exploration tools:** Developing career pathway maps that help individuals explore available opportunities in the local life sciences industries.^{1,2}
- **Multi-modal communication:** Utilizing a range of communication channels, such as social media, email marketing, print media, radio, and television, to disseminate information about life science careers and related opportunities to reach a wide audience. This could include highlighting diverse role models and featuring testimonials from successful individuals in life science careers that can inspire and motivate others to pursue similar paths.

Activities should be tailored to the specific needs and interests of the target audience and thus may involve additional elements. Language-specific and cultural competencies should be considered in order to reach the diverse target population. Successful proposals offer a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach that engages the public and industry stakeholders through targeted strategies.

¹ <https://letstalkscience.ca/sites/default/files/2021-09/LTS%20Career%20Awareness-English.pdf>

² [https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP\(2018\)11&docLanguage=En](https://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP(2018)11&docLanguage=En)

We seek to support a mix of high-reach strategies that engage the wider community and more targeted approaches that engage individuals with educational or economic barriers to employment. However, regardless of the approach, the proposed design must incorporate strategies to connect individuals to life sciences or STEM-related training and employment opportunities (e.g., a public awareness campaign that promotes a website with training resources). We anticipate reaching a minimum of 2,000 individuals with this funding, at least at the level of exposure. We expect that more intensive interventions seeking to increase enrollment of Boston residents into training opportunities will inevitably engage fewer individuals—but ideally, the initiative will drive at least 300 residents to pursue opportunities in the life sciences over the course of the 18-month engagement.

Section III. DELIVERABLES, REPORTING, TIMELINE

The consultant will work in close partnership with the Office of Workforce Development on this project. Funded projects should start on or about July 1, 2023, and conclude on December 31, 2024.

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| RFP Released | March 31, 2023 |
| Responses Due | May 5, 2023 |
| Project Start | July 1, 2023 |
| Project End | Decemeber 31, 2024 |

The ultimate aim of this funding is to encourage the uptake of life sciences and STEM-related training opportunities among historically underrepresented groups. With this downstream goal in mind, we have developed key point-in-time benchmarks that will provide an accurate picture of how funded programs are attaining the goals of the grant. Performance outcomes will vary depending on program design and on the target population but might include one or more of the following indicators (outcomes are listed in order from least intensive to most intensive interventions):

- # exposed to the campaign
- # of shares, likes, and comments demonstrating a level of engagement with public awareness efforts
- # who have increased awareness of jobs and careers in key sectors
- # who have increased access to life sciences training activities
- # who increase their knowledge of how to access classes/training programs
- # of enrollments
- # who increase their competency attainment, technical skills, and abilities
- # who feel as though they gained relevant workplace skills
- # who increase their social capital (% of youth with a professional reference or mentor)
- # placed in a job with meaningful career progression
- # transitioning into good jobs (living wage, benefits) in life sciences or STEM sectors

- # transitioning to further education and training pathways connected to life sciences or key STEM occupations

Awarded grantees will work with OWD during the contracting phase to determine specific deliverables and outcome indicators based on the amount awarded and the scope of work.

OWD will monitor and evaluate selected programs to ensure program compliance and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the service strategies. Monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, site visits, quarterly reports, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities and operations. Organizations must demonstrate the capacity to perform administrative responsibilities, including maintaining records of participants and submitting program reports and invoices in a timely manner. Grantees will be expected to provide a narrative of activities and progress to date, including demographic, indicator, and outcome metrics.

Section IV: PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Please respond to the following in your technical narrative:

1. Organizational Background (including the documents provided and the following details) – 10%

- Organization's Mission and Vision
- Areas of Specialization
- Organizational History
- Honors and Awards
- Names of the principal officers and key staff of the organization. Describe their area of expertise and what role they will perform in the project
- Identification of the major consultants, if used
- Description of connections and collaborations of partners

2. Technical Proposal – 40%

- Describe the intent of the program, targeted area of need, population(s) to be served, the scope of activities, and the outcomes. Please include information on the evidence base for each strategy that will be employed
- Describe how the proposed services can be targeted toward each specific audience.
- Explain how the proposed tasks/deliverables relate to any or all of the outcomes outlined in Section III of this RFP
- Describe the plan for recruiting, training, monitoring, supporting, and retaining participants
- Describe the eligibility requirements for participants and the number of participants who will be recruited
- A timeline for project activities
- A description of how the program will cultivate a diverse pool of staff that is reflective of and culturally sensitive to the target population and how the program and potential community partners may assist the applicant in recruiting mentors or role models
- Bidders are expected to monitor progress on the proposed activities and evaluate outcomes. This should include specific processes and outcome indicators to measure progress toward the delivery of activities and achievement of outcomes. Indicators that could be monitored include:

- Process measures (implementing activities and producing materials, training, and other relevant outputs).
- Short-Term Outcomes (changes in knowledge, attitude, beliefs, skills, confidence, or other factors among a variety of target audiences, for example, through pre or post-tests or questionnaires).
- Intermediate Outcomes (improvements in enrollment in life sciences training/education programs)
- Long Term Outcome/Impact (demographic changes in life sciences)
- Describe the methods to monitor and assess the delivery of the proposed strategies
- Describe the methods and tools that will be used to evaluate the success of the proposed strategies
- Describe the plan for how data will be collected, secured, and shared with the funder in a timely manner, at least quarterly

3. Organization's Capacity – 20%:

- Description of prior experience with non-profit clients and processes for projects of similar scale and complexity; the capacity to function and operate all aspects of providing services to the population; and the professional qualifications of individuals assigned to the project as demonstrated in the Technical Proposal.
- Description of previous collaboration experiences in providing related services and outcomes achieved by the collaboration.

4. Fee Proposal and Required Forms/Attachments - 20%

Provide a detailed fee proposal for all activities, fees, and expenses, including hourly rate, not to exceed **\$500,000** (TO BE SUBMITTED IN A SEPARATE EMAIL TO ABIGAIL CROSS, abigail.cross@boston.gov, MARKED AS EXHIBIT A).

5. Letters of support

Letters of support from key partners, particularly employers, are strongly encouraged. Only attach letters of support attesting to partnerships and relationships with other organizations you plan to involve directly in your program model, as described in your proposal. Although not required, letters of support may be considered in proposal evaluation to the extent that they strengthen the sections of your proposal scored by evaluators, as described below.

6. Provide project references, including a list of past project examples. - 10%

Section V. TERMS OF PROCUREMENT

APPLICATION DEADLINE

OWD must receive responses to this RFP by **Friday, May 5, 2023, at 5:00 PM**

Technical (narrative) proposals must be submitted via email to: Sarah Soroui, Director of Research, Evaluation, and Analytics, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, sarah.soroui@boston.gov.

Price proposals must be submitted separately via email to: Abigail Cross, Assistant Deputy Director, Special Initiatives & Grants Management, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, abigail.cross@boston.gov.

It is the sole responsibility of the responder to ensure their proposal is complete and submitted on time. No responses will be accepted after the due date and time. OWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids. The award of a contract for services requested by this RFP shall be subject to the approval of the Board of the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC) of Boston.

SUBMISSION OF INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be submitted in writing to Sarah Soroui, Director of Research, Evaluation, and Analytics, via email: sarah.soroui@boston.gov. Phone calls will not be accepted. The deadline to submit questions is **April 28, 2023, by 5:00 PM.**

Responses to questions received during the procurement process will be posted on the OWD website at **boston.gov/workforce**. It is the bidders' responsibility to check the website for updates and postings.

OWD is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

Applicants should ensure their proposals comply with the following requirements:

- A response to each section of the RFP is required and should follow the guidelines and sequences specified in the Proposal Guidelines section (Section IV). Each section should be labeled.
- Every section of the Request for Proposals should be completed in full. If funded, the proposal will provide the basis for contract negotiations, and final negotiated terms will be incorporated within the contract as the Statement of Work.
- Proposals should be typewritten, double-spaced, in 12-point Arial font with one-inch margins.
- The proposal narrative may not exceed 10 pages. The page limit does not include the cover sheet, budget forms, or any required attachments.
- Some sections require appended material. All forms should be completed in full.
- **Fee proposals must be submitted separately from the technical (narrative) proposals.** Absolutely no responses will be accepted after the due date and time. OWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids. The award of a contract for services requested by this RFP shall be subject to the approval of the EDIC Board.

NOTE: The checkboxes in this section may be used as a tool to ensure each section of the proposal is included and complete.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

This section provides an overview of the process for submitting your proposal in response to this RFP. Responders are strongly advised to read this section in its entirety since failure to comply with the requirements can result in disqualification.

a. Checklist

This checklist is for your use, to make sure that you are submitting everything that is required in your proposal. You do not need to include the checklist with your proposal, but please use the checklist before submitting your proposal to be sure your proposal is complete.

Sections A and B identify the items that are required to reply to the technical proposal and the price proposal, respectively.

There are three columns for each item listed:

- RFP Section - this is where you can find details in the RFP document for each item listed on the checklist.
- Form (Y/N) – this identifies items on the checklist that have a form and those which do not.
- Completed – Use this box to check off the items that have been completed.

The last section, Section C, provides a final check to make sure that you are not making any mistakes that would cause your proposal to be eliminated.

| | RFP Section | Form (Y/N) | Completed (✓) |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>A. Required Items for Technical Proposal</i> | | | |
| 1. Organizational Background | IV.1 | N | |
| 2. Technical Proposal | IV.2 | N | |

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|---|------------|-----------|--|
| 3. Organization's Capacity | IV.3 | N | |
| 4. Letters of Support (Not Required) | IV.5 | N | |
| 5. Project References | IV.6 | N | |
| 6. Certification of Non-Collusion | IV.4 | Y | |
| 7. Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action | IV.4 | Y | |
| 8. Certificate of Compliance with Laws | IV.4 | Y | |
| <i>B. Required Items for Price Proposal</i> | | | |
| 1. Consultant Fee Proposal Form | IV.4 | Y | |
| <i>C. Final Review</i> | YES | NO | |
| 1. Did you submit the proposal before the deadline? | | | |
| 2. Did you submit separate technical and price proposals? Price proposals should be sent to abigail.cross@boston.gov ; Technical [narrative] proposals should be sent to sarah.soroui@boston.gov . | | | |
| 3. Did you review all standard contract forms? The selected firm will be required to sign all forms at contract | | | |

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| award, and should not expect to incorporate changes. | | | |
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EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

a. Evaluation of Proposals

The criteria we are using for judging the strength of the technical proposal are outlined below. Each proposal will be evaluated in accordance with [M.G.L. c. 30B, sec. 6](#).

b. Minimum Evaluation Criteria

All proposals received by OWD will first be reviewed to determine whether the proposal meets all minimum criteria identified in the RFP. Minimum criteria are found in the Checklist under ‘Submission of Proposal’

For a proposal to meet all minimum criteria, a responder must unconditionally be able to check each item as ‘Completed’ for Sections A and B and ‘Yes’ for each item in Section C. Minimum evaluation criteria reflect those standards or attributes that OWD considers essential to the performance of the contract.

c. Comparative Evaluation Criteria

Proposals that have met all minimum evaluation criteria will be evaluated according to the comparative evaluation criteria that follow in this section. After reviewing, the evaluation team will prepare written evaluations for each proposal. The evaluators will assign a rating of ‘highly advantageous,’ ‘advantageous,’ or ‘not advantageous’ to each criterion.

For each section outlined below:

- Evaluators will view a proposal as being ‘highly advantageous’ if it meets all the listed requirements.
- A proposal will be considered advantageous if it meets most of the listed requirements.
- A proposal will be viewed as ‘not advantageous’ if it fails to meet most of the listed requirements.

The team will use the comparative evaluation criteria to evaluate each responder’s overall qualifications. All comparative evaluation ratings will be determined by the evaluation team. Price proposals will be evaluated separately from the technical proposals. The evaluation team will not see the price proposals until after the technical evaluations are complete. Service and supplier diversity will be a vital part of our procurement process and will be considered when selecting a consultant.

The following criteria will be used to rate the proposals:

1. Organizational Background, Capacity, and Project References: The proposal demonstrates that the project team assembled has significant experience with relevant projects.
2. Technical Proposal: The project proposal demonstrates an extensive and thorough understanding of the scope of services and provides a creative approach to the requirements of this RFP; provides a comprehensive and well-organized work plan to deliver on the proposed approach and recommends a well-conceived and/or includes innovative work items which supplement the scope of services as outlined in this RFP.
3. Fee Proposal (TO BE SUBMITTED IN A SEPARATE EMAIL TO ABIGAIL CROSS, abigail.cross@boston.gov, MARKED AS EXHIBIT A) and Required Forms/Attachments (SEE EXHIBITS B, C, and D): Responder's price proposal meets budget requirements and provides a detailed narrative proposed budget aligns with the value of proposed evaluation.

OWD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive or modify any requirement contained in this RFP, to amend without consultation any proposal, and to affect any agreement deemed to be in the best interest of the City of Boston and its residents. OWD will determine the most advantageous proposal from a responsible and responsive proposer, taking into consideration the price and all evaluation criteria set forth in the RFP.

Exhibits

EXHIBIT A: CONSULTANT FEE PROPOSAL FORM

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| EXHIBIT A: CONSULTANT FEE PROPOSAL FORM | |
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This form must be submitted in a separate sealed envelope labeled FEE PROPOSAL and addressed as follows:

Office of Workforce Development
43 Hawkins Street
Boston, MA 02114-2907

SUBMITTED BY:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| NAME | |
| FIRM | |
| ADDRESS | |
| TELEPHONE / FAX | |

Under the conditions set forth by the OWD, the accompanying proposal is submitted to provide Consultant Services.

The total fee proposal is \$ _____

FEE PROPOSAL FORM (cont.)

| Consultant Level | Staff | Name/Job | Hourly Rate | Billing | Estimate d Number of Hours |
|---------------------|-------|----------|----------------|---------|--|
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Total Estimated Expenses \$ _____

EXHIBIT B

CERTIFICATION OF NON-COLLUSION

The undersigned certifies under penalties of perjury that this bid, or proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word “person” shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club, or other organization, entity, or group of individuals.

(Signature of the individual submitting proposal)

(Name of business)

EXHIBIT C
NONDISCRIMINATION AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action

The Consultant agrees:

1. The Consultant shall not, in connection with the services under this Contract, discriminate by segregation or otherwise against any employee or applicant for employment based on race, color, creed, national origin, age, sex or sexual preference and shall undertake affirmative action measures designed to guarantee and effectuate equal employment opportunity for all persons.
2. The Consultant shall provide information and reports requested by OWD pertaining to its obligations hereunder and will permit access to its facilities and any books, records, accounts or other sources of information which may be determined by OWD to affect the Consultant's obligations.
3. The Consultant shall comply with all federal and state laws pertaining to civil rights and equal opportunity including executive orders and rules and regulations of appropriate federal and state agencies unless otherwise exempt therein.
4. The Consultant's non-compliance with the provisions hereof shall constitute a material breach of this Contract, for which EDIC may, in its discretion, upon failure to cure said breach within thirty (30) days of written notice thereof, terminate this Contract.
5. The Consultant shall indemnify and save harmless EDIC and OWD from any claims and demands of third persons resulting from the Consultant's non-compliance with any provisions hereof.

Signed

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

EXHIBIT D
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

Certificate of Compliance with Laws

Massachusetts Employment Security Law

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 151 A, §19A(b), the undersigned hereby certifies under the penalties of perjury the Consultant, with Department of Career Services (DCS) ID Number _____ has complied with all laws of the Commonwealth relating to unemployment compensation contributions and payments in lieu of contributions.

Compliance may be certified if the Consultant has entered into and is complying with a repayment agreement satisfactory to the Commissioner of DET, or if there is a pending adjudicatory proceeding or court action contesting the amount due pursuant to M.G.L. c. 151 A, §19A(c).

Massachusetts Child Care Law

Pursuant to Chapter 521 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1990, as amended by Chapter 329 of the Massachusetts Acts of 1991, the undersigned hereby certifies that the Consultant:

1. _____ employs fewer than fifty (50) full-time employees; or
2. _____ offers either a dependent care assistance program or a cafeteria plans whose benefits include a dependent care assistance program; or
3. _____ offers child care tuition assistance, or on-site or near-site subsidized child care placements.

Revenue Enforcement Protection Program

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 62C, §49A, the undersigned hereby certifies that the Consultant's Social Security or Federal Identification No. is _____, and that to the best of his/her knowledge and belief, the Consultant has filed all state tax returns and paid all state taxes required by law.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2023.

BY: _____