



**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
OF SOLANO COUNTY

## **REQUEST FOR QUOTES**

### **Community Pathways Into Bioeconomy / Biotechnology Careers**

**Proposals Due by July 26, 2024, by 4:30 p.m. PST**

#### **Introduction**

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Solano County is seeking quotes from qualified vendors to build community awareness and pathways into the bioeconomy industries or biotechnology careers. The vendor must be familiar with providing services within Solano County (particularly in Vallejo) and/or with targeted demographic groups.

The WDB's industry-based job training strategies are designed to support job seekers along an in-demand career pathway. Career pathways allow individuals to pursue incremental, stackable skills that will lead to economic mobility and better jobs as they advance along their chosen career pathway. The ultimate goal of these funds are to invest in a community-based, equitable pathway for Solano residents into emerging industries and occupations that provide living wage jobs.

The WDB anticipates selecting multiple awardees for an anticipated total investment of up to \$200,000. Requested amounts by vendors should reflect the level of activity proposed. For example, a pilot bootcamp may cost up to \$100,000 to include instructors and training materials, whereas the costs of hosting a community event may cost \$30,000. (*Please note these are not funding guidelines, rather examples.*)

The contracted activities must be completed by May 31, 2025.

#### **Background**

The WDB is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to build and sustain a skilled workforce, support a vibrant economy, and create a shared prosperity for the community of Solano County. The WDB oversees federally-funded workforce services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) on behalf of Solano County, as well as other special projects. Staff members provide tailored job search services, job preparation, training, and placement services to job seekers, as well as work with local businesses to support both business-specific talent development efforts and industry-wide initiatives.

The Solano County Board of Supervisors allocated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to the WDB for workforce development activities to include career and training awareness strategies. This solicitation is conducted based on the requirements and parameters of ARPA and the related policies and regulations of the U.S. Department of Treasury, the County of Solano, and the WDB.

APRA focuses on investments for disproportionately impacted individuals. For workforce-related activities, the WDB determined the following locally prioritized populations, based on analysis of Solano County unemployment rates during the pandemic:

- Members of a minority group
- Individuals under the age of 35
- Populations residing in ARPA-designated areas within Fairfield or Vallejo
- Individuals whose current or last employment was considered low-wage (*a wage less than the [MIT self-sufficiency wage](#) for Solano County*)
- Low-income households & communities
- Low-levels of education (*equal, or less than, a high school diploma or equivalency*)

The WDB identified, in its [Bioeconomy in Solano County: Developing a Talent Development Infrastructure Report](#), that the bioeconomy is defined as economic activity that is driven by innovation and research of biological resources, and that is enabled by technological advances in engineering and computing. There are three major subsectors of the bioeconomy: biomedical, ag tech, and bioindustrial. The report continues that in Solano County, the average earnings in the sector are \$124,693, a livable wage in Solano County. Solano's current bioeconomy labor market data shows a strong presence of biotechnology in the county, particularly concentrated in biomanufacturing. A number of biotechnology companies, including Lonza Biologics, Metrel, Mettler-Toledo Ranin, and Agenus Bio, have announced their plans to locate facilities in Vacaville in the next five years. Solano County also boasts a strong training presence in the industry, with several offerings at Solano Community College.

However, public awareness of the industry and its employment opportunities, as well as diverse pathways into the industry represent a gap in the region. The WDB conducted a community survey in December 2023 showing most community residents were unaware of biotechnology, but expressed interest in the opportunities the industry presented.

As part of the action plan developed to address gaps in Solano's talent development infrastructure, the WDB and its partners identified the need to create local talent attraction efforts to encourage more diverse representation in the industry throughout career entry points, including community and education events to build awareness of the industry and its career opportunities among county residents.

### **Scope of Services**

The WDB seeks multiple vendors to develop and implement career awareness and entry point access into the bioeconomy industry cluster. A wide range of activities and projects may be proposed. The WDB encourages community-centric activities with messaging that is culturally competent for Solano's community.

Activities may include the entire county, but the WDB is interested in focusing activities in Vallejo to ensure equitable access to industry opportunities. Up to five (5) bonus points will be awarded to proposers if activities are targeted in Vallejo.

Examples of activities include, but are not limited to:

- Career or industry awareness events
- Building community awareness of careers through digital storytelling or artistic representations that highlight worker voices and diverse populations
- Community-focused STEM skill building projects, such as community labs, hackathons, and bootcamps

Please note that if proposing to serve participants, the WDB must conduct eligibility of participants and will require co-case management of participants with awardee to ensure compliance with federal requirements. Any vendor proposing to serve participants must describe a plan for engaging with the WDB to conduct eligibility and co-case management.

### **Quote Submission**

Interested entities are encouraged to provide proposals demonstrating their ability to conduct appropriate activities or projects that meet the goals of the RFQ. Proposals should be no more than five (5) pages.

At a minimum, the quotes should include the following elements:

- Overview of activity(ies) or project proposed;
- Methodology for engaging the community equitably;
- Description of vendor's capacity to provide requested services within the identified timeline;
- Details of the proposed timeline and project milestones;
- Description of vendor's background and qualifications that would prepare them for this project; and
- A cost estimate for proposed services. Costs should represent feasible, yet cost-effective, activities.

### **Fee and Method of Payment**

Payment will be based on a cost-reimbursement model. Payments will be made no more frequently than at monthly intervals. Payment for work completed can be expected within 30 days of invoice receipt and verification of work performed. Upfront costs of up to 10% of the award may be requested by the selected vendor during contract negotiations.

Payments will partially be made with federal dollars; therefore, all respondents will be required to certify that they are not debarred from doing business with the federal government and are not in default on any obligations due to the federal or state government before a contract is issued. Any contractor must become registered in SAM.gov before payment can be processed per ARPA requirements.

### **Timeline**

<u>Event</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Request for Quotes issued	June 28, 2024
Deadline to submit questions	July 23, 2024 by 5:00pm PST
Responses to questions posted	July 24, 2024 by 5:00pm PST

Proposals due	July 26, 2024 by 4:30pm PST
Anticipated Award Announcement	August 5, 2024
Intended Contract Start Date	September 2, 2024
Intended Project Completion Date	May 31, 2025

### **Contract Negotiations**

The selected vendor(s) must be prepared to enter a contract with the WDB that shall incorporate requirements under ARPA. During the contract negotiation phase, the selected vendor(s) will be required to submit the following documentation:

- Proof of Insurance
- System for Award Management (SAM) verification (*required for all federal contractors*)
- W-9 Form
- Signed Certifications and Assurances form (*see RFQ resources on the WDB's website for contract terms and conditions*)
- County Direct Deposit Form if requesting reimbursement through direct deposit

### **Submission Requirements**

Submissions are due no later than Friday, July 26, 2024 by 4:30 p.m. PST by email. Documents must be in Word, Excel, or PDF format and must be emailed to **Tammy Gallentine** at [tgallentine@solanowdb.org](mailto:tgallentine@solanowdb.org).

### **Technical Assistance:**

If you have any RFQ questions, you must submit written questions via email to [tgallentine@solanowdb.org](mailto:tgallentine@solanowdb.org). Questions must be submitted by July 23, 2024 by 5:00 p.m. PST. Answers will not be considered final until posted on the WDB website at <https://solanoemployment.org/opportunities/>.