

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative
Pre-Bid Questions & Answers
RFP Due Date: May 19, 2017

NOTE: Thank you for your interest in the Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative (MWBLC) project. Our team has attempted to address questions to the best of our ability. As indicated in the RFP, local education agencies (LEA) receiving awards will receive intensive and customized technical assistance (TA) to implement the project intervention (i.e., enhanced services). For the application simply demonstrate that you have the capacity to implement the project services—early engagement with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), three work-based learning experiences (one paid by the employer), and the formation of an interagency transition team.

#1 Q: If our LEA already provides pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) services under an agreement with DORS, can we continue to provide those?

A: Yes, the LEA can continue to provide pre-ETS services under an agreement with DORS to all eligible youth – that is students with IEPs or 504 plans. One of the authorized Pre-ETS must be work-based learning experiences.

#2 Q: How will the PAID experiences be funded? Since Pre-ETS is only for pre-employment services?

A: Students will be paid directly by an employer for paid work experience. LEAs (or partnering community rehabilitation providers (CRPs)) can bill through Work-Based Learning Pre-ETS. Short-term paid employment is an authorized Pre-ETS service.

#3 Q: Are grant funds used to pay CRPs?

A: No, see page 3 of the RFP on how grant funds can be used. CRP's approved by DORS to provide Pre-ETS may be funded directly through DORS.

#4 Q: Are the grant funds used to fund paid experience or only services that are considered pre-employment transition services?

A: No. See page 3 of the RFP for allowable use of grant funds. However, a short-term work-based learning experience paid by the employer also falls under the scope of pre-employment transition services.

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#5 Q: If our LEA does not have an agreement with DORS for the provision of Pre-ETS, would we still be eligible to apply for the grant?

A: Yes, we will provide technical assistance to the LEA that is awarded a grant to develop an agreement with DORS for the provision of pre-employment transition services, specifically work-based learning experiences. Alternatively, you may provide Pre-ETS to students in your LEA in collaboration with an approved Pre-ETS provider— such as a community rehabilitation program who is approved or authorized to provide work-based learning experiences.

#6 Q: How does an LEA provide work experiences for students getting diplomas who do not have room for it in their schedules?

A: If awarded, customized technical assistance will assist LEAs in identifying a model to help coordinate required services. Student schedules should not limit participation in enhanced services.

#7 Q: What constitutes the Maryland Interagency Transition Team?

A: See page 6 of the RFP. LEAs may utilize an existing interagency team or develop a new one. Awarded LEAs will receive technical assistance to help form a team, if needed, and define the roles and responsibilities of the interagency team.

#8 Q: Our LEA already offers work-based learning experiences to eligible students. How are the work-based learning experiences in the MWBLC model different?

A: Although all work-based learning experiences authorized under Pre-ETS can be offered by the LEA, those described in the MWBLC model must have certain specific requirements. Each eligible student must have a minimum of 3 work-based learning experiences which meets certain requirements. The experience must:

- ✓ Occur outside the school in an integrated employment setting, and
- ✓ Be of sufficient duration and frequency to provide a meaningful work experience aligned with student goals

At least one of the three work-based experiences must be a short term paid job at least minimum wage in an integrated setting with the employer paying the wage.

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#9 Q: Will this project exclude the Control Group youth from receiving Pre-ETS services?

A: Absolutely not. Any student with a disability is entitled to participate in Pre-ETS services, this would include any student in the control group.

#10 Q: If we get the grant, are we limited in what additional Pre-ETS services (beyond the intervention) we can offer to either treatment or control youth?

A: No, you can offer any Pre-ETS services you want. Additional Pre-ETS services provided to students in the treatment group will be tracked.

#11 Q: You mentioned training and TA, where will that take place? Do we need to travel and account for travel in our budgets for training and TA? If so, how often?

A: The training and technical assistance support to LEAs will be designed to support you on-site. The TA team will travel to the LEAs; support will be offered virtually through an on-line group platform. If LEAs are asked to travel for training it will be limited.

#12 Q: Letters of Commitment – many partners will be formed after the application process. Which letters do you need for applications?

A: Letters should be secured from the DORS Regional Director, School Superintendent, and any partners named in the project narrative. We understand more partnerships may be formed afterwards. Please follow guidelines on p. 10 of the RFP.

#13 Q: You mentioned the research grant is 5 years, but the project length for LEAs is 2 years. What is the difference?

A: Each site provides services for two years. Follow-up evaluation, conducted by an independent evaluator, occurs over 5 years.

#14 Q: If our LEA was part of the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC) can we still apply for this grant opportunity?

A: Yes.

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#15 Q: Would summer youth employment (SYE) be part of the intervention?

A: Yes, it would be an allowed intervention under most circumstances.

#16 Q: We have a TriCounty interagency council that is pretty large – is that what is considered a consortium?

A: Yes. Follow consortium guidelines in the RFP.

#17 Q: Can the LEAs limit the sample target population i.e., only students receiving diplomas?

A: No, LEAs may not limit the target population, students will be randomly assigned by the independent evaluator to either the treatment or the control group.

#18 Q: The MD-WBLC RFP says that the first set of awards will be for fiscal year 2018-2019. School starts in August 2017 right before the fiscal year... will selected LEAs be able to begin implementing services and be paid for them, prior to 10/18?

A: The state fiscal year starts July 1, 2017. Once there is a signed agreement with the LEA grant awards will be issued shortly thereafter.

#19 Q: How do I come up with my target sample number?

A: Estimate the number of rising Juniors and/or youth 2 years prior to exit who are eligible for DORS Pre-ETS (i.e., IEP or 504).

#20 Q: Can non-public schools (e.g., Maryland School for the Blind or Maryland School for the Deaf) be the lead applicant?

A: No, only public LEAs can be the lead applicant. If there are eligible students in a non-public site who come from a selected LEA and are eligible, they can be included in recruitment efforts.

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#21 Q: You mentioned a budget template, where can I find it?

A: The budget template is posted on the MSDE website along with the RFP at <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/Grants/index.aspx>. Click Quarterly Reporting Spreadsheet.

#22 Q: If I am interested in applying for 2018/19 school year should I apply now?

A: Yes, you need to apply now but you can defer until next school year.