



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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The Workforce Development Board of San Luis Obispo County
&
County of San Luis Obispo Department of Social Services

Request for Quotes

For

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Business Retention and Layoff Aversion Services

(Rapid Response)

SECTION I: PROGRAM INFORMATION

A. BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

The Workforce Development Board of San Luis Obispo County (WDBSLO) is seeking proposals from qualified, experienced organizations to provide county-wide business retention and layoff aversion services to promote the WDBSLO's role in the County's overall economic vitality and workforce development. Proposals are being accepted from agencies that demonstrate a familiarity with the local economy and workforce issues. Interested bidders will demonstrate knowledge of local education and training programs available to job seekers and employers, exhibit strong linkages to local businesses and the public sector and demonstrate expertise in inter-agency collaboration. The WDBSLO seeks to award a single contract, however responses submitted may include a multi-organization collaborative partnership so long as one entity is identified as the lead applicant who would be the sole contractor of the WDBSLO.

In partnership with the Board of Supervisors, the WDBSLO implements the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), oversees the America's Job Center of California (AJCC) in San Luis Obispo County, conducts Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion, and establishes programs in response to the needs of San Luis Obispo County jobseekers and employers. The WDB includes representatives from private businesses, education, labor, economic development and community-based organizations. The Board of Supervisors appoints WDB members who serve as volunteers for four-year terms.

The primary purpose of Rapid Response Services, as mandated by the Employment Development Department (EDD) Directive WSD 16-04, and as stated in federal guidance, is to enable affected workers to return to work as quickly as possible following a layoff, or to prevent layoffs altogether. Under guidance from WIOA, required Rapid Response activities must include the "delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction), including comprehensive business engagement

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and layoff aversion strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment”.

Layoff aversion is often situation-dependent, and potential options and successful outcomes depend on a variety of factors. One of the important factors is time—the longer the time before a layoff or potential layoff, the more options are likely to exist for comprehensive layoff aversion opportunities. Because not all possible strategies or activities make sense to consider always or in all scenarios, it may be helpful to organize the likely solutions around certain timeframes. The following is a breakdown of a range of possible layoff aversion activities across a general “intervention timeline.”

Timeframe	Examples of Layoff Aversion Activities
Ongoing strategic or administrative activities (regardless of proximity to layoff or potential layoff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement, maintain and publicize a state or local layoff aversion policy; • Create and sustain effective partnerships with a wide range of organizations that contribute to layoff aversion strategies; • Gather data and intelligence related to economic transition trends within industries, communities or at specific employers, and plan strategies for intervention; • Develop early warning networks and systems utilizing data and intelligence gathered; • Identify heavily concentrated industries and sectors and related training needs in the geographic area; • Engage in proactive measures such as business visitation to identify indicators of potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses; • Connect employers and workers with short-term, on-the-job, and customized training and apprenticeships before or after layoff and prior to new employment.
More than one (1) year prior to a potential layoff or potential layoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with businesses to conduct comprehensive production cost studies with the goal of continuing cost-effective production within the United States; • Help a company spin off an under-performing business unit to focus on core competencies; • Help companies practice continuous improvement in processes and quality, constantly looking for opportunities for new products, customers, markets, and business models.

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<p>From approximately six (6) months to one (1) year prior to a layoff or potential layoff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with business focused organizations to assess risks to a company, propose strategies to address those risks, implement services, and measure impacts of services delivered; • Conduct prefeasibility or company valuation studies to determine the possibility for employee buyouts or Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), or more commonly, the sustainability of the company with new products, retooled production processes, or new customers and markets; • Facilitate employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading, when available; • Examine alternative business ownership options through economic development partners; • Utilize Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for firms to help employers negatively affected by imports to remain competitive; • Leverage Short-Time Compensation programs through Rapid Response and/or business engagement strategies.
<p>From approximately six (6) months prior to, up through and following a layoff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize incumbent worker training for eligible workers based on state or local rules, including TAA; • Encourage use of Short-Time Compensation (shared work) programs in states with such programs incorporated into state Unemployment Insurance law; • Ensure strong connections with reemployment focused activities within a state or local area; • Hold on-site job fairs or targeted hiring events with nearby business in need of workers with similar competencies or skill sets; • Conduct talent-transfer events or hold reemployment boot camps; • Connect to labor unions that may be able to assist in accessing skilled workers and assessing their training needs; • Link with state or local economic development organizations to match business growth opportunities with available pools of skilled workers, including those currently dislocated or soon to be laid off.

B. FUNDING SOURCE AND PERFORMANCE PERIOD

Funding for this project is available from the County's allocation of WIOA Title I funds. The selected contractor will be considered a subrecipient of prime federal funds per 2 CFR 200 and subject to pass-through terms and conditions (CFDA #17.258, #17.259, #17.278).

The Workforce Development Board may enter into a contract with the successful bidder for a base term beginning September 2021, through June 30, 2022. The initial base-year contract will not exceed \$100,000, and final funding amount will be determined based on WIOA funding amounts received by the WDBSLO.

This will be a cost-reimbursable contract. The selected contractor will be reimbursed monthly in arrears for approved and allowable contract costs incurred and paid in accordance with a detailed line item budget approved by the County.

All activities must be allowable under the provisions of WIOA Public Law 113-128 and in compliance with applicable WIOA regulations and any other requirements identified by the State, County or federal governments. All business retention and layoff aversion activities must comply with WIOA guidelines and EDD Directive WSD 16-04 "Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion Activities."

C. SCOPE OF WORK

The purpose of this Request for Quotes (RFQ) is to solicit services from an experienced and qualified entity to provide business retention and layoff aversion services to businesses in San Luis Obispo County in an effort to mitigate job loss and save jobs. The WDBSLO intends to award one contract, however multiple entities may collaborate on a proposal to serve the entire county under a single contract.

The WDBSLO intends to fund specific business retention and layoff aversion activities that:

- Establish the WDBSLO and its provider network as trusted and dependable partners addressing the talent and service needs of businesses;
- Are specialized in and focused on meeting the needs of businesses;
- Build long-term relationships to better understand and address business needs;
- Provide outreach and services to ensure that businesses and business owners in historically underserved communities have the opportunity to engage in Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion programs;
- Refer businesses to a network of services to support human resource development and business growth;
- Contribute to designing and implementing county-wide, industry-driven sector strategies;
- Reflect deep understanding of the needs of local job-seekers; and

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- Establish linkages between employers and job-seeker services by coordinating closely with the WDBSLO's America's Job Center of California (AJCC) operated by Eckerd Connects, a non-profit workforce development agency.

WIOA services for businesses in San Luis Obispo County are currently delivered by AJCC staff. This RFQ solicits proposals for business retention and layoff aversion activities that go beyond existing AJCC business services to address the needs of specific industry sectors or other identified regional workforce challenges. These activities will complement and support the region's workforce development system. These services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Business Retention Activities

- Build relationships with national, state, regional and local business services providers to link business customers to available resources and services (i.e., business start-up assistance, loans, industry roundtables, human resources assistance, etc.);
- Refer businesses to a network of services and supports, through required and recommended partnerships;
- Refer and connect businesses to appropriate work-based learning strategies, including incumbent worker training;
- Convene industry sector working groups to align and leverage county-wide workforce investment to meet the needs of employers;
- Collaborate with WDBSLO staff to develop and implement an effective outreach and marketing plan to engage employers.

Layoff Aversion Activities

The selected contractor will deliver comprehensive layoff aversion strategies and activities for transitioning businesses to prevent or minimize unemployment. These services may include:

- Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses to create an environment for successful layoff aversion efforts;
- Help employers in managing reductions in workforce, which may include early identification of firms at risk of layoffs and assessment of the needs of and options for at-risk firms;
- Utilize data provided by the WDB to identify at-risk businesses;
- Convene service partners, such as the AJCC, to deliver services to affected businesses and workers;
- Connect businesses to resources such as loans, business assistance programs, market analyses and economic development activities to address needs and prevent layoffs;

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- Work with WDBSLO staff to develop systems and processes for identifying and gathering information for early warnings of potential layoffs or opportunities for layoff aversion;
- Analyze and act upon data and information on dislocations and other economic activity in the state, region, and local area;
- Work with the WDBSLO and WDBSLO staff to analyze reports and data on San Luis Obispo County labor market information to identify trends, patterns, statistics and figures that help WDBSLO develop strategies to retain, attract and expand jobs;
- Develop and maintain partnerships with other Federal, State and local agencies and officials, business associations, technical councils, industry councils, labor organizations, economic development organizations, and other public and private organizations, as applicable;
- Provide updates and presentations to the Workforce Development Board on services provided.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to rethink our service delivery strategy and physical footprint. The selected contractor should be able to provide services virtually. Moreover, once locations start to reopen, the contractor may be asked to hold part-time office hours, at no-cost to the contractor, at the AJCC or other County of San Luis Obispo site to solidify the bond of the overall workforce development system in the region.

Layoff aversion requires a new culture of prevention and a strong infrastructure, including clarity of roles among regional partners. The selected contractor must coordinate and cooperate with AJCC staff and WIOA service providers to achieve WDBSLO's stated strategic plan goals and to adopt a business engagement and layoff aversion function that is responsive to the changing needs of industry and the regional economy.

The selected contractor is expected to utilize CalJOBS for documentation, correspondence and file maintenance. Training will be provided as needed.

D. PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Contractor performance will be evaluated against quantitative measures. Areas of WDBSLO evaluation will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Number of businesses served;
- Number of jobs retained;
- Number of workers rapidly-reemployed;
- Number of referrals provided to other WIOA programs, partners and service providers;
- Number of partnerships created;
- Number of presentations provided at WDBSLO meetings; and
- Number of convenings with stakeholders conducted.

Respondents may also propose additional metrics to track in their projects.

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