

ERIE COUNTY
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OPPORTUNITY MODEL
FOR
THE ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

RFP Number	08095VF
RFP Release Date:	August 29, 2008
Deadline for Proposal Submission:	September 19, 2008
Return RFP Response to:	Program Support Unit Department of Social Services 95 Franklin Street, Room 866 Buffalo, NY 14202
Inquiry Contact:	Tricia Dittmer Systems Support Unit Phone: (716) 858-6797 Patricia.Dittmer@erie.gov

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of the TANF and SN programs is to help low-income families enter the workforce and achieve self-sufficiency. The core goal focuses on moving families into the workplace through the provision of necessary support services. This includes providing the highest quality counseling services to persons suffering from chemical dependency and other disabling conditions; directing consumers towards the best addictions/medical treatment available, and to provide the most comprehensive vocational rehabilitation evaluation, in addition to assisting consumers with the most expedient and most comfortable return to work service. Research studies and recent local social services districts have indicated that some individuals with a history of chemical dependency who are sanctioned for noncompliance with work requirements can face multiple, unidentified barriers to participation that have prevented the individual from fully engaging in appropriate work activities. It is recognized that the same problems that impede employment progress may be more common among those with a history of chemical dependency. Personal and family characteristics and circumstances can make this population a challenging group to engage and retain in work activities. In some cases this is due, in part, to clients being reluctant to face the reality of serious problems or to logistical problems such as child care and transportation.

II. PURPOSE

The Purpose of this RFP is to secure the services of an eligible organization to engage 100 TANF (Family Assistance) and 275 Safety Net (Single) clients in vocational programming and provide work experience opportunities in order to accommodate Federal participation requirements. Recent policy requirements impose strict standards that require individuals fully participate in employment preparation activities. The funding that supports this RFP is intended to provide vocational training to individuals still engaged in or having recently completed a Drug and Alcohol treatment program. Federal rules are more prescriptive regarding what services meet federal work participation requirements and how program participation is documented and reported. Erie County is placing an emphasis on education and job skills training required to develop the skills of public assistance adults so they achieve improved employment and job advancement outcomes.

For each individual engaged in the Vocational Rehabilitation Opportunity Model or VROM the provider must develop an employability plan that identifies the education, job skills and training needs to enhance the participant's future success.

The Employability plan should:

- Consider the participant's education, work history and career preferences
- Contain measurable and verifiable long and short term goals, such as education gain and credential achievement
- Specify a timeframe for completing program components
- Include an assessment of individual aptitudes, interests and acquired job skills
- Address the barriers that have prevented the participant from successfully participating in welfare-to-work activities.

Vocational Training:

The organization is required to achieve a 75% monthly participation rate for clients engaged in work experience activities and is required to place 5% of the engaged clients into unsubsidized employment each month.

Organizations must be able to demonstrate that the training being offered will provide workforce skills that are in demand within the community given the proper preparation. Participants must obtain jobs within the local labor market. Training should involve 35 hours of instructional time per week.

Additionally, preference will be given to organizations that provide participants with work experience. Work experience entails providing unpaid work performed at a public or not for profit organization to enable participants who are not ready for vocational training and not able to participate in 35 weekly hours of training. Core work activities would involve 25 – 30 hours each week. To meet the required hours of participation work experience participants must be supervised on a daily basis. Providers are encouraged to make available work experience opportunities that are consistent with the participant's career plan when possible. Organizations may provide work experience at their own location or may coordinate with another organization, with the approval of the Erie County Department of Social Services.

This contract will have the following performance matrices:

RFP

Proposed TANF 2009

Benchmark Matrix

PHASE #	PHASE DESCRIPTION	COST/ PARTICIPANT	MAXIMUM # PARTICIPANTS	MAXIMUM PHASE ALLOCATION
I	Recruitment/Testing/ Evaluation/Career Plan	\$500.00	75	\$37,000.00
II	Work Experience Opportunities	\$500.00	57	\$28,500.00
III	Vocational Training Enrollment	\$600.00	50	\$30,000.00
IV	Vocational Training Completion	\$700.00	25	\$17,500.00
V	Entry to Employment	\$800.00	15	\$ 12,000.00
			CONTRACT TOTAL	\$125,000.00

RFP
Proposed SN 2009
Benchmark Matrix

PHASE #	PHASE DESCRIPTION	COST/ PARTICIPANT	MAXIMUM # PARTICIPANTS	MAXIMUM PHASE ALLOCATION
1	Recruitment/Testing/ Evaluation/Career Plan	\$500.00	200	\$100,000.00
II	Work Experience Opportunities	\$500.00	142	\$71,000.00
III	Vocational Training Enrollment	\$600.00	80	\$48,000.00
IV	Vocational Training Completion	\$700.00	40	\$28,000.00
V	Entry to Employment	\$800.00	35	\$28,000.00
			CONTRACT TOTAL	\$275,000.00

III. FUNDING

The Erie County Department of Social Services is making \$400,000 available for the Vocational Rehabilitation Opportunity Model for SN and TANF Recipients.

IV. REQUIREMENTS

1. All bidders must verify that they have been in operation for five years.

2. All bidders are required to provide the names of at least three organizations for which they have provided similar services for at least three years.
3. The name, address and phone number of an appropriate contact person in each organization must be provided.
4. All bidders must provide the details of at least three programs through which the organization served a population similar to that which this program will serve.
5. All bidders must disclose any negative findings or any adverse contingency notes from their audited financial statements for the last three years.

V. INVITATION

The Erie County Department of Social Services invites interested, qualified organizations to submit a proposal for Vocational Rehabilitation Opportunity Model for SN and TANF Recipients.

1. Any inquiries to this RFP must be directed, in writing to Tricia Dittmer, Systems Support Specialist, 95 Franklin, Room 864, Buffalo, New York 14202. Phone : (716) 858-6797 FAX: (716) 858-7205. E-Mail: Patricia.Dittmer@erie.gov.

VI. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

The successful bidder must provide a program that accomplishes the following:

1. Service SN and TANF individuals.
2. Receive referrals of eligible individuals from Erie County Department of Social Services.
3. Provide work experience and employment assistance.
4. Monitor client attendance, punctuality, attitude, and academic performance.

VII. VENDOR PROPOSAL

The following sections should be included in the proposal:

1. Program Narrative - A description of the program, services and activities that will be provided.
2. Provider Experience – Agencies should detail past experiences and successes in administering services to this population. Agency should describe readiness and ability to implement and staff the program in a timely manner.
3. Budget – Agency must include a detailed budget for operation of program detailing staff costs for delivery of service.

VIII. INSTRUCTIONS

1. Those submitting proposals do so entirely at their own expense.
2. The County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted in response to its RFP.
3. Proposals will be blind graded. Respondents are to submit six copies of the entire proposal with only a separate cover letter indicating the name of the respondent.
4. The proposals and cover letter must be filed with the Erie County Department of Social Services, Program Support Unit, Room 866, 95 Franklin Street, Buffalo, New York, 14202, in a sealed envelope which is clearly marked on the outside, **RFP # 08095VF** no later than 00/00/2008.
5. All respondents must be able to comply with Erie County insurance requirements.

IX. SELECTION PROCEDURE

Bid proposals must meet all of the criteria described in this request for proposals. Any proposal that does not meet all criteria will be disqualified. Those proposals that meet all criteria will be evaluated by a Selection Committee on the following factors:

1. Quality of the proposal (weighted at 10%).
2. Cost factors (weighted at 10%).
3. Experience in similar projects (weighted at 25%).
4. Familiarity with target population (weighted at 25%).
5. Quality of skill / vocational training and job services offered (weighted at 30%).

The proposals will be blind graded. The selection committee may request additional information, clarification and /or an interview. It may permit correction of errors or omissions under certain circumstances. The selection committee will make a decision as to which of the bidders it will recommend to the Commissioner of Social Services who will make the final decision which is subject to Erie County Legislature approval.

X. FINAL SELECTION

A subsequent contract will be subject to approval by the Erie County Executive, Erie County Legislature, and the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority.