

AMENDMENT #1
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS NO. 19100103 TANF WTEP
Workforce Training and Education Programs

Amendments to the RFP are as follows:

1. First paragraph of Section 2.3 shall be amended to state:

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) is soliciting non-profit organizations *and non-federal entities*, in multiple locations, with successful experience providing education and workforce training programs that target youth ages 16 to 24 and adults age 18 - 59 who are unemployed or underemployed. Programs offered should help stabilize the family by providing opportunities for program participants to engage in adult education, career and technical education and workforce training programs that align with the sector strategies identified by the Local Workforce Development Boards and addresses the skills gap identified in the WIOA Combined State Plan. Reference: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/ms.pdf>

2. Fourth paragraph of Service Area Description in Section 2.3 shall be amended to state:

The Lead Agency shall be responsible for ~~hiring~~ **retaining** and managing all qualified staff, securing signed written agreements with other entities to provide coverage in the selected geographical area, assure program compliance, spending oversight of funds by sub-recipients or contractors, monitoring the programs and services, and take full responsibility of any sub-recipient that has entered into an agreement to provide services and do not meet their obligations. The Lead Agency will serve as the single point of contact for all program issues.

3. Second Paragraph under Section 2.3(A)(2) shall be amended to state:

2) The youth programs are expected to improve the high school graduation rate, assist out-of-school youth in obtaining a high school equivalency (HSE) ~~through work-based learning opportunities~~. The programs and services sought for adults are expected to include employer-driven elements and create career pathways through industry recognized stackable credentials, work-based learning such as apprenticeships and internships, and soft skills necessary for employment. Youth and adult services should include supportive services such as transportation, tuition, books and fees necessary for program enrollment. The proposer's strategies used should achieve or exceed each performance standard. The scope of program components and responsibilities are presented under three main categories: A Work-Ready Community; Work-Based Learning; and Support Services. Below are certain significant responsibilities under each category.

4. Section 2.3(A)(2), subsection (c) SUPPORT SERVICES shall be amended to state:

Respondent must demonstrate the ability to provide and/or collaborate with community based organizations and community action agencies to provide wraparound support services to mitigate barriers that prevent or hinder engagement and successful completion of program activities. Respondent should describe in detail its ability to assist with ~~some, if not all, of~~ the following supportive services **to include but not limited to:**

- i) Assistance with obtaining a valid ID;
- ii) Testing and license fees;
- iii) Trauma-informed support to stabilize the family;
- iv) Legal assistance with credit recovery, record expungement, etc.;
- v) Transportation;
- vi) Childcare;
- vii) Financial literacy;
- viii) **Books; and**
- ix) **Tuition assistance after all other funding resources have been exhausted.**

5. Questions and Answers are attached.

Please acknowledge receipt of Amendment #1 by returning it, along with your proposal package, by November 15, 2019, at 2:00 PM, CST. This acknowledgement should be enclosed in your proposal package. **Failure to submit this acknowledgement may result in rejection of the proposal package.**

Name of Company

Authorized Official's Typed Name/Title

Signature of Authorized Official
(No stamped signature)

Date

Should an amendment to the RFP be issued, it will be posted on the MDHS website (www.mdhs.ms.gov) in a manner that all Respondents will be able to view. Further, Respondents must acknowledge receipt of any amendment to the solicitation by signing and returning the amendment with the proposal package, by identifying the amendment number and date in the space provided for this purpose on this form, or by letter. The acknowledgment must be received by MDHS by the time and at the place specified for receipt of proposals. It is the Respondent's sole responsibility to monitor the website for amendments to the RFP.

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
WORKFORCE TRAINING & EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Question Number	RFP Page Number	Paragraph Number	RFP Section Reference Number	Question & Answer
1	7		Sec. 2.1	<p>Purpose: Please confirm that the \$15 M is the amount available for the period 1/1/2020 - 9/30/2020 and that additional funds will be made available for any subsequent years.</p> <p>ANSWER: The \$15 million total will be available for the period starting January 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020.</p> <p>Does the funding have to be expended in the 9-month time frame or just obligated?</p> <p>ANSWER: All funding must be spent by September 30, 2020.</p> <p>Can unexpended funds be carried over to the next program year?</p> <p>ANSWER: No.</p>
2	7		Sec. 2.1	<p>Purpose: What are the federal and state statutes and regulations that govern the program?</p> <p>ANSWER: www.ecfr.gov for TANF Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 200; also see the following website www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/tanf/laws-regulations for laws and regulations</p> <p>State Codes - see https://www.sos.ms.gov/Education-Publications/Pages/Mississippi-Code.aspx</p> <p>What liability does the potential subgrantee assume for federal or state penalties due to performance issues?</p> <p>ANSWER: Renewal of the subgrant will be determined following an assessment/evaluation of goals reached.</p>
3	7		Sec. 2.3	<p>Scope of Services: Where does the upper age limit of 59 originate?</p> <p>ANSWER: See answer to question 2 above.</p> <p>Is the target age a programmatic regulation?</p> <p>ANSWER: Yes, Youth age 16 - 24 and adults age 18 - 59.</p>
4	8		Sec. 2.3	<p>Service Area Description: Please clarify number 2-Description and number of participants served in each county. Is this the estimated number of individuals to be served in each county?</p> <p>ANSWER: Yes. The number of anticipated participants to serve in each county.</p>

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5	8		Sec. 2.3	<p>Target Population and Service Area Description: Will referrals be made from DHS to the respondent for this program? ANSWER: MDHS will make referrals as appropriate; however, subgrantees will be primarily responsible for marketing and outreach.</p> <p>How will this process work? ANSWER: Subgrantees will be included in “My Resources” directory available on the MDHS website. MDHS counties will be informed of TANF subgrantees and their services.</p> <p>Will the HUB be used as the referral process? ANSWER: No.</p>
6	8		Sec. 2.3	<p>Target Population: The target population includes individuals residing in high poverty communities that are age 16 to 59. High Poverty Areas - Defined by the US census as areas with "40 percent of the tract population living below the federal poverty threshold." A. Question: If an individual does not reside in a high poverty community/tract as defined by the U. S. Census but is a recipient of SNAP or TANF, are they eligible? ANSWER: Yes.</p> <p>B. Can you provide us a list of eligible “high poverty communities” in order to estimate numbers of participants and areas served? ANSWER: No.</p> <p>C. Will we have access to any DHS-maintained data? (i.e. list of TANF participants or SNAP participants) ANSWER: No.</p> <p>D. Can the number of TANF and SNAP participants, aggregated by county, be provided to us? ANSWER: See Attachment A to this Amendment.</p>
7	9		Sec. 2.3 (A)(2)	<p>Service Description: Indicates that supportive services to adults and youth include tuition, transportation, books and fees; however, the list of support services on p. 10 does not list tuition, or books. Question: Are tuition and books considered a support service? ANSWER: Yes. RFP amended, 2.3 Scope of Services, A. Service Description, 2a i-vii.</p>
8	10		Sec. B(2)	<p>Program, Reports, Evaluations and Outcomes: - This section includes a reference to an “established set of performance measures”. Question: What are the established performance measures?</p>

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				<p>ANSWER: Performance measures are those measures that the grantee will use to demonstrate that the proposed programs and/or activities are meeting the desired results. Refer to the RFP, Page 10, Section B.</p> <p>What are the performance goals that respondents must achieve? ANSWER: See Page 9, Section A Service Description, 2a i-v.</p>
9	12		Sec. 2.3(C)	<p>Trauma Informed Approach: This section requires that respondents describe in detail its ability to deliver a trauma informed approach.</p> <p>Question: What criteria will MDHS use to determine the presence of a trauma informed approach, given it is described as a paradigm shift.</p> <p>ANSWER: MDHS will be seeking proposals that demonstrate Respondent's commitment to including trauma-informed values and practices in Respondent's delivery of services.</p>
10	13		Sec 2.4	<p>Sub grant Terms – This section states that subgrant may be renewed provided that upon MDHS assessment and evaluation, the Subgrantee's performance under the current subgrant meets the performance measures of the Agency, and adequate funding remains available.</p> <p>Question: Please describe assessment and evaluation.</p> <p>Assessment and evaluation will be based on each subgrantee's established set of performance measures. Also see answer to question 8.</p> <p>A. Is there an existing tool that is used by MDHS for assessment and evaluation? ANSWER: No. Assessment tool will be created based on each subgrantee's service delivery model.</p> <p>B. Given this is a nine-month period of performance, are there prescribed performance measures and goals for that time frame? ANSWER: See answer above.</p>
11	15		Sec. 3.1(K)	<p>Use of Federal Funds: This section states that individuals receiving TANF services under another funding source/grant will not be included in the count for the number of participants served in this grant.</p> <p>Question: That seems contradictory to the requirement that at least 50% of individuals served under this grant must be TANF/SNAP recipients.</p> <p>A. How will the respondent know if the individual is being served under another fund source? ANSWER: Individuals served by Respondent utilizing another funding stream shall not be included in the number of individuals served under the TANF grant for the same services.</p>

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				<p>For Example: An individual receiving career technical training using WIOA funding shall not be counted as career technical training under TANF unless a percentage of the cost of career technical training is used from both funding streams. If training is 50% WIOA and 50% TANF, then the individual could be counted under the TANF grant for that percentage, however such percentage must be noted on Respondent’s grant reports provided to MDHS.</p> <p>B. What does this mean in reference to leveraging resources with similar programs, and braiding funding? ANSWER: Please see above answer.</p> <p>C. Can the individual be served from multiple fund sources, just not for the same service? i.e. WIOA for training and TANF/SNAP for a support service ANSWER: Yes.</p>
12			Sec. 2.3(C)	<p>“Trauma Informed Approach” requires the respondent to implement a trauma informed approach in its organizational structure and in its approach to serving clients and to provide information outlining its current position within at least one (1) of the four (4) stages of being trauma informed AND how their services within their identified trauma-informed stage(s) are responsive to people who have experienced trauma. MDHS lists 4 stages of being trauma informed: Trauma Aware, Trauma Sensitive, Trauma Responsive, Trauma Informed.</p> <p>Questions: What criteria will MDHS use to determine if a “trauma-informed approach” has been adopted (for instance, are respondents required to hold staff trainings, amend staff policies and take other formal actions to demonstrate it has adopted this specific approach)? ANSWER: MDHS will is seeking proposals that demonstrate Respondent’s commitment to including trauma-informed values and practices in Respondent’s delivery of services.</p> <p>Are other approaches that are similar to being “trauma-informed” acceptable if respondents describe in detail how their approach is closely aligned to the SAMHSA’s concept described in the RFP? ANSWER: Yes.</p>
13			Sec.2.3(B)(4)	<p>Respondents are directed to collect data and specific requirements for collecting data will be included in the agreement between MDHS and the service provider. Some of the required data elements will need to be kept secure and</p>

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				<p>confidential and monthly data reports will be submitted to MDHS via a mutually agreed-upon electronic format.</p> <p>Questions: What are MDHS’s minimum database requirements for collecting and transmitting client data?</p> <p>ANSWER: Please reference Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, Enterprise Security Policy - Part 1 Ch. 5: Servers, page 11 and Part 1 Ch. 12: Physical Access pages 17-18. See link below.</p> <p>https://www.sos.ms.gov/ACCCode/00000312c.pdf</p> <p>MDHS does require subgrantees to submit the data according to a specific electronic format that will be shared with subgrantees.</p> <p>Can MDHS provide examples of third party systems that meet MDHS’s data system requirements?</p> <p>ANSWER: MDHS does not have knowledge of third party systems that meet its data requirements. Subgrantees are encouraged to do their due diligence as they assess third-party systems.</p> <p>Are there minimum security requirements for maintaining client data on a third party system and if so, can MDHS provide guidance?</p> <p>ANSWER: Subgrantees are responsible for the secure handling of client data. See the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, Enterprise Security Policy - Part 1 Ch. 4: Data Classification, pages 9-10 and Part 1 Ch. 9: Data encryption page 14. See link below.</p> <p>https://www.sos.ms.gov/ACCCode/00000312c.pdf</p> <p>Can MDHS provide an example of what electronic formats for data transmission are acceptable?</p> <p>ANSWER: An example of an acceptable file format would be a Comma Separated Values (CSV) file. MDHS will provide to the subgrantees a secure method to upload data files.</p>
14			Sec. 2.3	<p>In “Target Population,” MDHS describes the target population as adults who are unemployed or underemployed, individuals who are age 16-59 residing in high poverty communities (defined as 40% of the Census tract population living below the</p>

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				<p>poverty threshold) and 50% of the total served must be receiving SNAP and/or TANF.</p> <p>Question: If an individual does NOT reside in a high poverty community, but is a recipient of SNAP or TANF and/or unemployed or underemployed, are they eligible for services under the RFP? ANSWER: Yes.</p>
15			Sec. 2.3(B)	<p>RFP states that MDHS will conduct periodic evaluations at its discretion to assess progress toward achieving goals. In Section 2.3 (B)(2), the RFP directs respondents to describe in detail an “established set of performance measures”. In 2.5, the RFP states that MDHS has discretion to renew the sub-grant “...provided that upon MDHS assessment and evaluation...the current sub-grant meets the performance measures.”</p> <p>Questions regarding 2.3(B), 2.3(B)(2) and 2.5: What evaluation criteria will MDHS use to determine if the sub-grantee has achieved progress toward its goals and is eligible for renewal? ANSWER: See answer for question 10.</p> <p>What are examples of established performance measures that are acceptable for sub-grantees to adopt? ANSWER: See answer for question 10.</p> <p>If “established performance measures” refers to employment outcome metrics, such as those required under WIOA, tracking and collecting the information will require longer than the initial 9-month grant period. What performance measures will MDHS evaluate during the initial 9-month grant period? ANSWER: See answer for question 10.</p>
16	8		Sec. 2.3	<p>Service Area Description, paragraph #4, “The Lead Agency shall be responsible for hiring and managing all qualified staff...”</p> <p>Question- Must the lead agency hire new or part-time employees that will work for partners, sub-recipients or contractors, such as the community college or community based organization that will provide services under this RFP? ANSWER: Please see item #2 of Amendment 1 to this RFP.</p>
17	9		Sec. 2.3	<p>Target Population, Question- Do individuals served have to pass a drug test? ANSWER: Drug testing is not referenced in RFP.</p>
18	9		Sec. 2.3(2)	<p>Service Description, subsection 2), “...assist out-of-school youth in obtaining a high school equivalence (HSE) through work-based learning opportunities.”</p>

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				Question- Please clarify obtaining a HSE “through” work-based learning opportunities. ANSWER: See amended RFP Page 9, Section A Service Description 2.
19	9		Sec.2.3(A)(2)	Page 9 Section 2.3 A. Service Description, subsection 2), “The proposer’s strategies used should achieve or exceed each performance standard.” Question- Please clarify or provide “each performance standard” ANSWER: See answer to question 10 regarding performance measures.
20	10		Sec.2.3(A)(2) (c)	Page 10 Section 2.3 A. Service Description, subsection 2) c. Support Services, Question-Is there a limitation per participant on funding for support services? i.e. not to exceed SNAP eligibility income limit per month? Can funds be used for drug test/treatment? ANSWER: Allowable support services referenced are based on need and are allowable after all other funding resources have been exhausted. Grant funds may be used for drug testing if listed as a service but grant funds cannot be used for drug treatment.
21	18		Sec. 4.3(5)	Page 18 Section 4.3 subsection 5) Personnel: Question: Must resumes’ be included for employees that work for partners, sub-recipients or contractors, such as community colleges or community action agencies? ANSWER: Inclusion of resumes is preferred; however, in the absence of resumes, job descriptions should be included.
22	19		Sec. 4.3(11)	Page 19 Section 4.3 subsection 11) Proposal Format Requirements: “All pages of the proposal shall be numbered.” Please clarify if the pages of the required last two (2) years of audited financial statements and other attachments must be numbered. ANSWER: The requested documentation from Sec. 4.1.10 does not have to be numbered.
23	7		Sec. 2.3	In section 2.3, it states that MDHS is seeking non-profit organizations to deliver services. Does “nonprofit organizations” include state government or local school district entities? ANSWER: “Non-profit organizations” include state government or local school districts.
24	10		Sec.2.3(B)(1)	In the RFP for Workforce Development, Section B. 1., will it be a requirement to meet the 50% or is this weighted in the review (i.e. points given if this item is met)? If an agency cannot

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				<p>demonstrate that half of the recipients will be TANF or SNAP recipients, will it eliminate the project from receiving funds? Will the agency refer SNAP and TANF clients to the program? ANSWER: Fifty percent of the total served must be a SNAP or TANF recipient. ANSWER: Serving SNAP or TANF population is a priority. ANSWER: Yes, see response to question 5.</p>
25	11-12		Sec. 2.3(C)	<p>Section 2.3(C) “Trauma Informed Approach” requires the respondent to implement a trauma-informed approach in its organizational structure and in its approach to serving clients and to provide information outlining its current position within at least one (1) of the four (4) stages of being trauma-informed AND how their services within their identified trauma-informed stage(s) are responsive to people who have experienced trauma. MDHS lists 4 stages of being trauma informed: Trauma Aware, Trauma Sensitive, Trauma Responsive, Trauma Informed.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What criteria will MDHS use to determine if a “trauma-informed approach” has been adopted (for instance, are respondents required to hold staff trainings, amend staff policies and take other formal actions to demonstrate it has adopted this specific approach)? ANSWER: Please see answer to Question Number 9. • Are other approaches that are similar to being “trauma-informed” acceptable if respondents describe in detail how their approach is closely aligned to the SAMHSA’s concept described in the RFP? ANSWER: Please see answer to Question Number 9.
26	11		Sec.2.3(B)(4)	<p>In Section 2.3(B)(4) of the RFP, respondents are directed to collect data and specific requirements for collecting data will be included in the agreement between MDHS and the service provider. Some of the required data elements will need to be kept secure and confidential and monthly data reports will be submitted to MDHS via a mutually agreed-upon electronic format.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are MDHS’s minimum database requirements for collecting and transmitting client data? ANSWER: See answer to question 13. • Can MDHS provide examples of third party systems that meet MDHS’s data system requirements? ANSWER: See answer to question 13.

Question Number	RFP Page Number	Paragraph Number	RFP Section Reference Number	Question & Answer
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there minimum security requirements for maintaining client data on a third party system and if so, can MDHS provide guidance? ANSWER: See answer to question 13. • Can MDHS provide an example of what electronic formats for data transmission are acceptable? ANSWER: See answer to question 13.
27	8	1	Sec. 2.3	<p>In Section 2.3, “Target Population,” MDHS describes the target population as adults who are unemployed or underemployed, individuals who are age 16-59 residing in high poverty communities (defined as 40% of the Census tract population living below the poverty threshold) and 50% of the total served must be receiving SNAP and/or TANF.</p> <p>Question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an individual does NOT reside in a high poverty community, but is a recipient of SNAP or TANF and/or unemployed or underemployed, are they eligible for services under the RFP? ANSWER: Yes.
28	10; 13		Sec.2.3(B); Sec. 2.3(B)(2); and Sec. 2.5	<p>In 2.3(B), the RFP states that MDHS will conduct periodic evaluations at its discretion to assess progress toward achieving goals. In Section 2.3 (B)(2), the RFP directs respondents to describe in detail an “established set of performance measures”. In 2.5, the RFP states that MDHS has discretion to renew the sub-grant “...provided that upon MDHS assessment and evaluation...the current sub-grant meets the performance measures.”</p> <p>Questions regarding 2.3(B), 2.3(B)(2) and 2.5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evaluation criteria will MDHS use to determine if the sub-grantee has achieved progress toward its goals and is eligible for renewal? ANSWER: See answer to question 10. • What are examples of established performance measures that are acceptable for sub-grantees to adopt? ANSWER: See answer to question 10. • If “established performance measures” refers to employment outcome metrics, such as those required under WIOA, tracking and collecting the information will require longer than the initial 9-month grant period.

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				<p>What performance measures will MDHS evaluate during the initial 9-month grant period?</p> <p>ANSWER: See answer to question 10.</p>
29	5		Sec. 1.8	<p>1.8 pg 5: General Question: Does the state list examples of successful grants that have previously been funded using TANF WTEP funds? If so, where can these applications be found?</p> <p>ANSWER: Prior awarded TANF grants may be viewed on Mississippi Transparency website by copying and pasting the following link in your web browser: http://www.transparency.mississippi.gov/</p>
30	7		Sec. 2.3	<p>2.3 pg 7: Is this funding only available for non-profit organizations?</p> <p>ANSWER: Funding is available for non-profit organizations and non-federal entities. Please see item 1 of the attached Amendment 1 to this RFP.</p>
31	19		Sec. 4.3(9)	<p>4.3 9) pg 19 : Cost Data: Will a sample budget narrative and cost worksheet be provided?</p> <p>ANSWER: A sample budget narrative and a cost estimation worksheet will be provided to those Respondent's that properly submit a letter of intent.</p>
32	N/A	N/A	N/A	<p>Is there a data management system for this program that those who respond can input data into or do we need to budget to use our current data system to manage participant data and track performance?</p> <p>ANSWER: Subgrantee will be responsible for data system to manage participant data and track performance.</p>
33	N/A	N/A	N/A	<p>Can funding be used for any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Salaries and Fringe Benefits for student navigators, coordinators, instructors, and/or compliance and reporting data managers b. Program Supplies and Materials c. Training and Certification Completion Incentives for Participants d. Equipment to expand training opportunities for participants e. Purchase or renovation of training facilities <p>ANSWER: Please refer to the MDHS Subgrant/Agreement Manual by copying and pasting the below link in your web browser: https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/MDHS-SubgrantAgreement-Manual.pdf</p>