



Invitation to Negotiate for Public Information and Outreach Services

Sept. 1, 2021

PURPOSE. CareerSource Florida Inc. issues this Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) to elicit responses from full-service communications, outreach and public relations firms capable of contracting with CareerSource Florida to provide strategic, tailored and customer-focused collaborative outreach, recruitment and public information services.

The contractual relationship(s) will facilitate increased public awareness of, and recruitment into, workforce education and economic development services/programs; apprenticeship opportunities and apprenticeship expansion efforts/programs; workforce credentialing programs and resources; enhanced public and stakeholder education; and strong collaboration among workforce, education, community, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners.

In accordance with this corporation's guidelines that call for periodic evaluation of external contractor services, CareerSource Florida seeks to establish this contract with the possibility of two annual renewals. The contract period will be determined by CareerSource Florida. In the event CareerSource Florida determines the outreach capabilities of more than one contractor are in the best interest of the organization, CareerSource Florida reserves the right to contract with more than one respondent.

Within the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Governor's Reserve Funds Plan for Improved Workforce and Education Systems Alignment, approved by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors in June, an emphasis is placed on charting new and expanded pathways to employment, education, training and support services for Floridians who need additional workforce readiness help on their path to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity. Accordingly, this Public Information and Outreach Services contract will facilitate increased public awareness of initiatives that close achievement and attainment gaps for Floridians, serving job seekers facing barriers to employment and promoting strategic and cross-sector partnerships.

Under the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, CareerSource Florida is focused on ensuring the state workforce system, in collaboration with education and economic development partners, is meeting the evolving needs of Florida employers, job seekers and workers. These efforts demand increasing and strategic collaboration with statewide agencies, education providers, businesses and other entities for whom talent development and workforce quality is a top priority, including the Florida Department of Education, the State University System, the Florida College System and the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, and statewide and local economic development organizations such as the Florida Economic Development Council, Enterprise Florida, Space Florida, Visit Florida,

the Florida Chamber and Florida Chamber Foundation, and other partners within Florida's talent development ecosystem.

The approved contractor(s) will provide outreach services to assist with CareerSource Florida's continued implementation of the WIOA Unified Plan and the Department of Education's implementation of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), emphasizing the role of the workforce system to assist students and adult learners with enrolling in high-quality career and technical education (CTE) programs, integrated education and training programs, adult basic skills and high school equivalency coursework, and to assist job seekers, particularly with barriers to employment, with securing jobs, including apprenticeships, and connecting those individuals to their local career centers, school districts, adult education centers, technical centers/colleges, and/or Florida College System institutions, for assistance. The approved contractor(s) also will deliver on-demand services, including but not limited to, graphic design, outreach and recruitment, media engagement, video production, web/interactive, research, annual and special report development and publication, social media management, printing, copy writing and collateral development, development of ad hoc outreach plans and strategic communications planning and development, and other creative services as needed. Such services would be provided to CareerSource Florida and the Department of Education at their direction.

BACKGROUND. This spring, the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act of 2021 was unanimously approved by the Florida Legislature and signed into law by Governor DeSantis to better align the state's education and workforce systems with a focus on equity and efficiency to achieve a stronger, more competitive Florida. The REACH Act was created to address the evolving needs of Florida's economy by increasing collaboration and cooperation among state agencies and education institutions to improve access to training and employment for Floridians seeking services through the workforce system.

CareerSource Florida was established by the Florida Legislature to provide policy direction and general oversight to the state's workforce development system. As established in Chapter 445, Florida Statutes, this workforce system comprises CareerSource Florida; the Department of Economic Opportunity, which serves as the administrative and fiscal entity for CareerSource Florida; 24 local workforce development boards; and several state, regional and local partners including the state Department of Education and the state Department of Children and Families. A board of directors largely appointed by the Governor oversees policies and investments that impact the delivery of workforce services statewide as well as activities of CareerSource Florida. CareerSource Florida is managed by a president and professional staff located in Tallahassee.

Workforce development services are provided primarily through the 24 local workforce development boards throughout the state, which are chartered by CareerSource Florida, in partnership with the Florida Department of Education and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, as well as through the system-wide virtual job matching and labor market tool, Employ Florida at employflorida.com.

There are approximately 100 career centers in Florida, overseen by the local workforce development boards, that provide workforce-related services to individuals seeking jobs, to employed individuals needing skills upgrades to retain their jobs and to businesses seeking

to fill vacancies or stay competitive by upgrading the skills of their existing workers. More information about CareerSource Florida is available at careersourceflorida.com and about our 24 local board partners and the career centers they oversee by visiting their websites, which can be found by clicking the individual areas on the map [at this link](#).

In partnership with the Department of Education, CareerSource Florida demonstrates a commitment to the continued implementation of the WIOA Unified Plan. The Department of Education is responsible for WIOA Title II and Perkins V State Plan and implementation. Where WIOA seeks to improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation's economy Perkins V prioritizes academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary education students and postsecondary education students who elect to enroll in CTE programs and programs of study across Florida school districts, technical centers/colleges, and Florida College System institutions. The Perkins V State Plan focuses on a renewal of efforts to address issues of access and equity, especially for Florida's socio-economically challenged and other special populations. Combined with the directives of Executive Order 19-31, the WIOA Unified Plan and Perkins V State Plan aim to strengthen Florida's workforce, education and economic development services in support of the Governor's vision for Florida to be No. 1 state in the nation for workforce education by 2030. Combined, these efforts can be a force for economic, personal and professional transformation.

CONTRACTOR QUALIFICATIONS. Through this ITN, CareerSource Florida will select and negotiate a contract with a communications, outreach and public relations firm within the following parameters:

1. **Experience.** Firms must have been in business under their existing names and/or business structure for not less than five years from the date of issuance of this ITN. Respondents must be integrated communications firms with significant experience in all phases of digital and traditional outreach, public relations, earned, owned (including social) and paid media management, graphic and web design, video production, public affairs and communications services to a statewide market, in addition to outreach and recruitment experience for populations served by the Florida workforce system and Florida school districts, technical centers/colleges, and/or Florida College System institutions. That experience will be demonstrated by listing recent/current projects the firm has managed and results achieved.
2. **Capacity.** Responding firms must have significant in-house capacity and be able to create and execute strategic, integrated statewide outreach and recruitment campaigns; communications tools and tactics on an as-needed basis; and comprehensive, complete project management for CareerSource Florida and the Florida Department of Education. Subcontractors required for specific projects must be disclosed to the contract manager in advance.

The firm's capacity will be demonstrated by listing the education and work experience of the firm's staff and describing in-house capabilities.

A high priority is placed on customer service. While every effort is made to ensure work product is managed within typical business hours, responding firms must be able

to provide communications support as needed after hours and on weekends if special circumstances or deadlines warrant.

3. Workforce and Education Experience. In addition to the general firm experience mentioned above, preference will be given to firms with practical knowledge and experience working with a workforce development organization(s), and statewide partner organizations such as those outlined above under the section "Purpose." Knowledge of and experience in outreach to customers of focus under the federal WIOA and Perkins V Act, including but not limited to veterans and military spouses, low-income returning adult learners, special populations, and at-risk Floridians, will be important, as will demonstrated work product and successful outcomes working with statewide collaborative partners with complementary talent development goals and roles.
4. Noteworthy Accomplishments & Awards. As a partial measure of the firm's quality of performance, it would be appropriate to highlight instances where the firm and/or individuals within the firm who are still employed by the firm have been recognized for exemplary achievement.

SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES. Firms interested in submitting a response to this Invitation to Negotiate must electronically submit the following documents:

1. "Firm Questionnaire" – Respondents will provide information about the firm that addresses the preferences listed above. This information will be provided by completing this form: <https://form.jotform.com/212416128981153>.
2. "Examples of Work Product" – Respondents will provide examples of work that best illustrate the capabilities and talents of the firm and its individual members. This work product may include examples of advertising created for digital, print, radio and other outlets, videos, printed collateral such as informational brochures and reports, media kit materials and outreach materials that illustrate strategy-to-campaign execution on behalf of clients.

The work product should have been produced within the last two years. Each product that a respondent chooses to submit should reflect the work of staff members who developed the product and are still with the firm.

3. Presentations – CareerSource Florida may request a personal presentation by one or more of the responding firms, which would allow an opportunity to provide more examples of work product.
4. CareerSource Florida is subject to Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law, which requires that materials made or received by an agency, in connection with official business and used to perpetuate, communicate or formalize knowledge, are considered public records. All responses to this ITN will be considered public records.

Respondents should complete the form, including uploading any examples of work products they may wish to provide no later than **5 p.m. ET, Sept. 29.**

SELECTION. Potential respondents are reminded that this is not a bid nor a Request for Proposals and, therefore, CareerSource Florida is not seeking actual proposals, pricing plans or contract offers. CareerSource Florida will assemble an objective proposal evaluation team to review the responses and evaluate proposals based on which responses CareerSource Florida deems to be the most suitable and qualified. CareerSource Florida retains the sole authority for developing and applying the criteria used by the team to evaluate proposals. Responding firms should be prepared to provide, upon request, at least three references from clients with whom the firm has worked within the past 12 months.

CareerSource Florida may choose to request that one or more of the responding firms make a face-to-face presentation to an individual or individuals reviewing responses. If needed, every effort will be made to schedule the presentation(s) at a time and on a date satisfactory to the respondent. Presentations, if necessary, will be scheduled in Tallahassee at CareerSource Florida headquarters. CareerSource Florida, at its sole discretion, may determine that a personal presentation(s) is not necessary. Tentatively, CareerSource Florida plans to schedule presentations, if necessary, the week of **Oct. 18**.

NOTE: When CareerSource Florida decides which firm it deems to be the most suitable and qualified for this project, upon receipt of evaluations by the ITN review team, it will notify all respondents of that decision. CareerSource Florida will then set up a meeting with the company it selects and commence negotiations relative to specific 1) scope of services, 2) timetables for implementation and 3) costs. If negotiations are unsuccessful, CareerSource Florida retains the right to initiate contract negotiations with the next most suitable firm and continue that process until it successfully negotiates a contract. CareerSource Florida retains the sole authority to make its selection based on what it determines to be its best interest. CareerSource Florida, at its sole discretion, may reject any and all responses as not meeting the needs of this project. **CareerSource Florida anticipates that a selection decision will be made no later than Oct. 27.**

CONTRACT(S). The contract(s) resulting from this ITN will be a two-party contract between CareerSource Florida and the selected firm(s) in consultation with the Florida Department of Education. Any subcontractors the firm may use from time to time throughout the contract will not be a party to the firm's contract with CareerSource Florida and should be identified when the outside assistance is needed.

The contract(s) will establish pricing to be used for various aspects of the services provided by the contractor. The contract period will be determined by CareerSource Florida. As noted above, it is anticipated that there is an opportunity for contractual agreements for a period of up to three years including renewals. The actual length of the contract and any possible renewal options will be terms to be negotiated by the parties.

CONTACT. Firms should direct inquiries regarding this ITN by completing [this form](#).

No phone calls please.