



**Advance  
Central PA**  
Linking People & Business

## **TRAINING GAP ANALYSIS STUDY**

### **Request for Proposals for the Central PA Region**

Centre · Clinton · Columbia · Lycoming · Mifflin · Montour · Northumberland · Snyder · Union

Release Date: September 7, 2023

Submission Deadline: October 18, 2023

The enclosed specifications may be modified as required per the United States Department of Labor, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the PA Department of Human Services, the Advance Central PA Workforce Development Board or Local Elected Officials Board without prior notice to Proposers.

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## Section 1: Introduction

### Advance Central PA

Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation (CPWDC), doing business as Advance Central PA, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization formed in 1999 and is a local Workforce Development Board (WDB) authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. The Central Region Local Workforce Development Area includes Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Mifflin, Northumberland, Snyder and Union counties (referred to as Central Region).

Designated as a WDB, Advance Central PA is the grant recipient and administrator of these and other employment and training funds received for programs operated throughout the Central Region. Advance Central PA has a federal mandate to be the lead organization for workforce development planning and to arrange for a system of service delivery that meets the workforce needs of youth, jobseekers, and business alike. Advance Central PA is responsible for developing and implementing strategies around a broad workforce development agenda. Advance Central PA's diverse partners in the workforce development system range from public agencies, to private and non-profit businesses, to education and training providers including secondary schools, to community and economic development partnerships, to job seekers using the PA CareerLink® system, and young people.

Advance Central PA is governed by a private-sector led Workforce Development Board (WDB) representing diverse sectors in business, labor, community development, and education. Further, one commissioner

from each of the nine counties in the Central Region serves on the Local Elected Officials Board (LEO) with specific governance and oversight. All are dedicated to increasing the quality and accessibility of services for businesses, job seekers, and young people.

Advance Central PA is an equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

## PA CareerLink®

The PA CareerLink® is part of the American Job Center network, a one-stop solution to workforce needs in local communities across the United States. The PA CareerLink® is the go-to place for job seekers, young people, and businesses for workforce solutions. The locations in Central PA are as follows.

1. **PA CareerLink® Centre County**, 240 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte
2. **PA CareerLink® Clinton County**, 8 North Grove Street, Suite F, Lock Haven
3. **PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties**, 415 Central Road, Suite 2, Bloomsburg
4. **PA CareerLink® Lycoming County**, 329 Pine Street, Williamsport
5. **PA CareerLink® Mifflin County**, 6395 SR 103 North, MCIDC Plaza, Building 58, Lewistown
6. **PA CareerLink® Northumberland/Snyder/Union Counties**, 225 Market Street, Sunbury
7. **The Link**, mobile career center

## Purpose of Request for Proposal

Advance Central PA, through this RFP, competitively seeks a qualified provider of independent third-party analysis services to complete a comprehensive study on the strengths and gaps that exist in available workforce and education training programs that align with business needs and show how they intersect with job seeker demand in the nine-county Central PA Workforce Development Area. Results will inform Advance Central PA's strategic plans to strengthen the Central Region and assist training providers in aligning programs to meet community demand.

As part of this process, the selected provider will identify:

- the existing infrastructure and institutions that provide direct training services and outline available training programs and related costs for completion;
- programs under development, to the extent information is available from training providers;
- training needs according to top industry leaders, including unmet needs;
- and training interests according to job seekers.

The selected provider will conduct all research including gathering data, developing and deploying surveys, performing interviews, etc. as they find necessary to comprehensively analyze the training resources and needs of the region. The selected provider will compile results into a finalized report clearly documenting existing assets, analysis of need, and recommendations for improvement.

Results will be used to: understand the training providers/programs that currently exist compared to the training that is needed; understand the needs of businesses across sectors and what resources currently exist versus where gaps are; continuously improve the central PA workforce network so that services provided are relevant and efficient for job seekers and businesses; and analyze other key information.

Following the analysis as agreed upon as final with Advance Central PA, the selected provider will present information at a culminating event with stakeholders.

By submitting a proposal, an organization agrees that they must adhere to any and all Federal, State, and Advance Central PA policies.

## Section 2: RFP Process and Instructions for Submitting a Proposal

### Eligible Applicants

Proposals will be accepted from any private for-profit entity, public or private non-profit entity, government agency, local educational agency, community-based organization, or labor organization that **demonstrates the experience, qualifications, and capacity to deliver unbiased, comprehensive third-party evaluation services and reporting.**

The successful respondent will have professional and technical expertise to complete the entire scope of work.

Eligible organizations with or without previous experience as a contractor with Advance Central PA are encouraged to submit proposals. Proposals from consortia, partnerships or other combinations of organizations are allowable, but proposals must identify one organization as the lead agency with which Advance Central PA will subcontract directly.

Proposers must agree to a provision of services and demonstrate an ability to fulfill requirements of this RFP.

### Expected Timeline

RFP Released: (Available at <a href="http://www.AdvanceCentralPA.org">www.AdvanceCentralPA.org</a> )	September 7, 2023
Questions Submitted by:	October 9, 2023
Answers Posted by: (Available at <a href="http://www.AdvanceCentralPA.org">www.AdvanceCentralPA.org</a> )	October 13, 2023
Notify Advance Central PA of Intent to Submit Proposal by: (emailed to <a href="mailto:klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org">klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org</a> )	October 3, 2023
<b>Proposals Due by 4:00 p.m. EST:</b>	October 18, 2023
Evaluation Committee Review and Negotiations Begin:	October 19, 2023
Recommendation to Advance Central PA Executive Committee of the Workforce Development Board:	November 10, 2023
Notification on Status of Proposals:	November 10, 2023
Anticipated Contract(s) Start:	November 13, 2023
Project Deliverables Deadline:	June 28, 2024

### Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance will be provided through a written question and answer format. Applicants will be given an opportunity to identify specific questions and submit them in writing to Advance Central PA via email only. Questions must be emailed to:

Korrie Lucas, Assistant Director: [klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org](mailto:klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org).

Answers to submitted questions will be posted on [www.AdvanceCentralPA.org](http://www.AdvanceCentralPA.org) within 4 business days of receipt. Consistent with strict procurement policies, Advance Central PA will provide no technical or program assistance to individual proposers.

## Proposal Submission

Responses must be typed, using at least a 10-point font and be single sided with 1-inch margins with page numbers in the lower right-hand corner. Proposers are expected to comply with the page limitations for each section of the response as listed in proposal requirement sections of this request for proposals.

Proposals **saved as a PDF** (not scanned) or Microsoft Word document along with the **Excel Budget Form** must be submitted electronically to: [kucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org](mailto:kucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org) with the following subject line: **RE: Gap Analysis Proposal**.

Late submissions will not be considered.

## Review Process

Stage 1: Advance Central PA staff will initially evaluate each proposal for acceptability, with emphasis placed on completeness and responsiveness to requisite program criteria.

Stage 2: Proposals that have met the minimum criteria will then be reviewed and ranked by an Evaluation Committee comprised of members who have no fiduciary interest in competing for this funding opportunity and no perceived or real conflict in providing an objective study and final report.

Stage 3: The recommendations of the Evaluation Committee will be presented to the Advance Central PA Workforce Development Board's Executive Committee for approval.

Contracts will be issued directly to the selected provider by Advance Central PA. It is anticipated that a cost reimbursement contract will be awarded as a result of this RFP solicitation; provider will be reimbursed actual, allowable and allocable costs not to exceed the maximums stated in the contract.

## Scope of Work

Advance Central PA seeks a qualified provider of services who will provide all aspects of an objective and comprehensive third-party analysis of training needs from evaluation design, collection of data/evidence, analysis, recommendation, through to deliverables which include a final report and presentation.

Staff qualifications include professionals from relevant organizations skilled in delivering the scope of work as described.

Note that Advance Central PA reserves the right to approve or deny, in part or full, any program model suggestions.

Scope of work includes:

1. Lead project kick-off meetings with key Advance Central PA staff as appropriate and necessary for successful project completion such as to seek advisement on stakeholders to include in data collection processes, etc.
2. Submit monthly project status briefs to Advance Central PA.
3. Asset map of existing training providers offering services in the Central Region, this includes: local career & technical education (CTE) providers, independent training providers, colleges and universities, registered apprenticeships, and others. At a minimum, the asset map must include:
  - a. Training institution contact information
  - b. List of available training programs with details regarding the length of program, cost of program, and certifications that are received as a result of program completion.
  - c. Method of delivery (virtual, in-person, hybrid, etc.)
  - d. List of programs under development by each institution to the extent they are able to share.

4. Analysis of training needs according to business leaders representing a variety of industries within the region as not to bias the study towards a specific industry. Regional industries include but are not limited to: Advanced Manufacturing, Education (Including Early Childhood Education), Energy, Healthcare, Retail, Hospitality, Transportation, Building and Construction, etc.
5. Analysis of training interests/needs according to job seekers, that is, Central Region residents including job seekers and young people.
6. Analysis of the “match” between the asset map, training needs according to industry leaders, and training needs according to the public.
7. Determination of training gaps and clear recommendations for the training services most needed to meet actual needs, including capacity development needs that if met could fill gaps.
8. Exit conference with Advance Central PA staff to review preliminary findings, seek clarifications, etc. as a final report is developed.
9. Produce a clear, objective, professional final report that provides an overview of the entire analysis along with projected impact from filling training gaps and actionable recommendations.
10. Present findings to stakeholders at an event hosted by Advance Central PA with a goal of dialogue on how collaborative efforts could fill gaps in services.

## **Deliverables**

Advance Central PA requires the following deliverables:

1. **Objective Third-Party Gap Analysis Report**  
This report should clearly outline the research completed and stakeholders involved in the study, and present findings related to all areas outlined in the scope of work including findings, gaps in services, opportunities for improvement, and clear actionable recommendations. The report shall include an asset map of the available training programs which may be combined or provided separately as approved by Advance Central PA based on findings.
2. **Presentation to Stakeholders**  
The successful respondent shall present key findings from the Objective Third-Party Analysis report to key stakeholders at an in-person event hosted by Advance Central PA in the Central Region. Stakeholders will include representatives from K-12 school districts, colleges and universities, career and technical education programs, other training providers, WDB and LEO members, PA CareerLink® partners, Chambers of Commerce, and business representatives. The selected provider will share the results and promote open dialogue with a focus on stakeholders working together to fill gaps in services.

## **Section 4: Proposal Budget**

A cost reimbursement contract will be finalized during final contract negotiations with successful respondent. The proposer shall develop a line-item budget that will enable the proposal to meet the intent and requirements of the program, ensure successful implementation of the project and be cost-effective. The proposer should prepare a realistic and prudent budget avoiding unnecessary or unusual expenditures that would detract from the accomplishment of the objectives and activities of the project. The following information is provided to assist in the preparation of the budget. Strict adherence to all required and prohibited items is expected.

All contracts require:

- Line item budget for invoicing, program monitoring and audit;
- Monthly invoices for actual costs incurred; and
- Sufficient documentation for all costs incurred.

## Estimated Allocations and Budget

The purpose of the Project Budget is to demonstrate how the proposer will implement their plan with the funds available through this program. The budget is the basis for management, fiscal review and audit. Project costs must be directly related to the objectives and activities of the project.

**The total budget shall not exceed \$50,000.**

All activities, services, facilities and/or equipment, including leased items, which will be subcontracted by the proposer, must be procured following applicable regulations. Advance Central PA has final approval of all contract costs before funds are dispersed.

## Section 5: Proposal

### Cover Sheet/ Agreement and Checklist

Attached, complete the Cover Sheet in its entirety. Indicate agreement with/ability to comply with each requirement listed on the Agreement to Basic Requirements. Use the Checklist to ensure all requested information is provided with your proposal.

### Executive Summary

Include up to a two-page overview/summary of your organization and proposal.

### Proposal Narrative

Respond to all of the questions asked in the order they are asked. Do not weave your answers into the text; instead, use the question and answer format in your proposal (include the corresponding section letter and number of each question in the narrative response, example: A.1.). Including attachments as indicated in the questions will not count toward the page limitations of each section. The narrative cannot exceed 7 pages.

#### A. Organizational Capacity and Relevant Experience

1. Provide an overview of your organization and experience.
2. Describe your demonstrated success in providing objective analytical gap analysis studies.
3. Describe the key personnel and supervisors who will be assigned to this project, include their professional qualifications in completing a study from start to finish and their experience with projects of a similar scope.

#### B. Proposed Work Plan

1. Describe your approach to the proposed plan of work.
2. Provide a timeline with all key project tasks included from contract start through to final deliverables provided to Advance Central PA.
3. Describe the key project tasks and services to be provided to result in the Objective Third Party Training Gap Analysis Report.
3. Describe an example of similar work providing gap analysis services to a WDB or similar entity and outline three action items that you have recommended for WDBs to implement actionable recommendations.

## Budget

### A. Budget Narrative

(Limited to 2 Pages)

Submit a narrative that describes the following:

1. Describe how the project's proposed budget supports the stated objectives and activities in the project. At a minimum, please breakdown the budget by personnel, travel, supplies, other operating, etc. with enough detail that we can understand the direct cost of the project.
2. Indirect cost rate (if applicable).
3. Any unusual expenditures.
4. All proposed subcontracts, including the subcontracting organization, the amount that will be subcontracted and the function the subcontractor will fulfill.

### B. Budget

Submit a budget that clearly outlines a breakdown of the budget in chart/Excel form including specific lines by personnel, travel, supplies, other operating, etc. Specifically show the breakdown of hours spent on project tasks and the associated cost.

## Business License

Proposers must also attach one electronic copy of the current business license if applicable.

## Section 8: Disclaimer

Advance Central PA reserves the right to cancel or modify this request for proposal or the scope or funding to any extent necessary to ensure compliance with state and/or federal guidelines or if available funding is impacted due to the federal and/or state budget appropriations. All successful proposers must demonstrate the capability to modify the program design in order to comply with new regulations and/or changes to available funds, and by submitting a proposal, agree to do so.

Advance Central PA may, at its discretion, request presentations by, or meetings with, any or all respondents, to clarify or negotiate modifications to the respondent's proposal. However, Advance Central PA reserves the right to make an award without further discussion of the proposals submitted.

Advance Central PA may decide not to fund part or all of a proposal even though it is found to be in the competitive range if, in the opinion of Advance Central PA, the services proposed are not needed, or the costs are higher than Advance Central PA finds reasonable in relation to the overall funds available, or if past management concerns lead Advance Central PA to believe that the respondent has undertaken more services that it can reasonably provide.

Advance Central PA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, received as a result of this request or to negotiate separately with respondents. A contract for the accepted proposal will be based upon the factors described in this RFP.

Advance Central PA has the right to fund a lower ranked proposal over a high ranked proposal because of valid policy considerations, including but not limited to, organizational experience, geographical considerations, leveraging of outside resources and target populations.

Providers will allow local, state and federal representatives access to all records and materials



Advance Central PA reserves the right to determine both the number and funding levels of contracts financially awarded. Such determination will depend upon overall fund availability and other factors arising during the review process. Proposals submitted which are over the maximum amount of funds specified for this RFP will be rejected.

Advance Central PA is not responsible for any costs incurred by respondents prior to the selection. The cost to develop and submit a proposal in response to this RFP is not reimbursable.

This RFP is being solicited based on available funds.

Materials submitted with the proposal, and the proposal itself, become the property of the Advance Central PA and will not be returned.

Advance Central PA must comply with Pennsylvania's Right-To-Know Law, Act 3 of 2008, effective January 1, 2009, and may be requested and required to release information from proposals received in response to this RFP.

All proposals submitted will receive a response as to the action taken by the Advance Central PA. Respondents may request a briefing on the action taken on the proposal.

The submission of a proposal to the Advance Central PA does not assure or imply an award of a contract to the firm submitting the proposal. Advance Central PA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, to negotiate any offer made, and/or to cancel or amend any part of this application package for whatever reason.