



## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Out-of-School Youth Program

### Request for Proposals for the Central Region

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

Issue Date: January 8, 2026

Submission Deadline: February 27, 2026

Equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Program funded with federal dollars. For more information, visit: <https://advancecentralpa.org/about-us/public-notices/>

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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## RFP Summary and Timeline

<b>Advance Central PA competitively seeks one or more qualified providers to deliver high quality, effective services that ultimately connect young adults to long-term employment in careers with family-sustaining wages.</b>	
RFP Issue Date	January 8, 2026
Deadline for Questions	February 23, 2026 Email to: <a href="mailto:agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org">agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org</a> and <a href="mailto:klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org">klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org</a>
Answers Posted <a href="http://www.AdvanceCentralPA.org">www.AdvanceCentralPA.org</a>	On a rolling basis, within 4 business days of receipt
Notify Advance Central PA of Intent to Submit Proposal by	January 30, 2026 Email to: <a href="mailto:agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org">agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org</a> and <a href="mailto:klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org">klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org</a>
Proposals Due	February 27, 2026, 4:00 p.m. EST
Proposal Submission Process	Use the templates provided and refer to the checklist including submittal of the proposal in PDF format and the Budget Sheet in Excel format. Do not submit attachments that are not requested. Email to: <a href="mailto:agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org">agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org</a> and <a href="mailto:klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org">klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org</a>
RFP Website	<a href="http://www.AdvanceCentralPA.org">www.AdvanceCentralPA.org</a>
RFP Official Contact	Allison Grose, Advance Central PA Youth Programs Coordinator
Notification on Status of Proposals	Initial (not final): April 10, 2026 Ratified: June 17, 2026
Anticipated Contract Start	July 1, 2026
Anticipated Contract Length	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 with options to extend annually through June 30, 2030

## Section 1: The Opportunity

### 1.1 Summary

Advance Central PA competitively seeks one or more qualified providers to deliver comprehensive career development, work readiness, placement, and follow-up services to eligible young adults in the following 9 counties via an Out-of-School Youth (OSY) program: Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union.

This programming will be funded by and will follow all guidelines and requirements of WIOA Title I, including eligibility. OSY are defined as eligible young adults who are not attending any school, including secondary or post-secondary; they must be between the ages of 16 and 24 at the time of enrollment, and meet one or more other barriers.

Programming must help eligible Out-of-School Youth, hereafter referred to as “young adults”, take charge of the trajectory of their lives through services such as barrier remediation, career awareness, assessment, goal development, skill attainment, leadership development, and first-hand exposure to work experiences.

Expected accomplishments and outcomes include:

- Registration of young adults ready for and committed to comprehensive OSY workforce services
- Delivery of relevant and impactful services individualized to young adult needs
- Successfully completed paid pre-work experiences, paid internships and trainings that move young adults into desired employment along with compliance with expenditure requirements in this regard
- Placement in good jobs, including family sustaining jobs
- Overall compliance (e.g. data entry accuracy and timeliness, WIOA Program Elements, etc.)
- Meets/exceeds WIOA Common Measure outcomes and locally defined metrics described herein

### 1.2 Background

#### 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 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 jobseekers, young adults/youth, 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.

The WDB guides and directs PA CareerLink® operations and ensures high quality services to all customers, including OSY program participants. WIOA Title I funds support programs which serve young adult participants based on eligibility factors as defined in WIOA.

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

## **Advance Central PA's Region and Demographics**

The Central Region includes the following nine counties: Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Mifflin, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union. The region is primarily rural with several higher-density population areas throughout. A majority of the region is white with many families having lived in the region for generations. There are pockets of diversity, including refugees and other individuals with a first language other than English; driven by data, Advance Central PA requires that critical program documents be available in Spanish.

An estimated 105,999 youth ages 15–24 live in the region as of 2023, representing 17% of the total population. Youth poverty in the region is prevalent, with 33% of this population living below the federal poverty level. Education enrollment data shows that among youth ages 15–17, 87% are enrolled in secondary school, 3% are enrolled in postsecondary education, and 10% are not enrolled. Disconnection increases for older youth: 30% of young adults ages 18–24 are not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.

Labor force data also highlights disconnection from the workforce among youth in the region. For youth ages 16–19, the labor force participation rate is 36%. Participation among young adults ages 20–24 is 58%.

Youth ages 14–24 who are employed are concentrated primarily in service-providing industries. The leading industry sectors employing youth include Accommodation and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Government. The most common occupational groups are Food Preparation and Serving, Sales, Transportation and Material Moving, and Office and Administrative Support roles.

Transportation is a major barrier for individuals in the region who might otherwise search for work. Many young adults do not have access to their own reliable mode of transportation, and rely on family members, friends, and limited public transportation. Fixed bus routes for transportation are only available in 3 of the 9 counties in the Central Region: Centre, Lycoming, and Northumberland. Other transportation options, such as rideshares, are expensive to use. Therefore, service delivery options must be tailored to individuals with easy access available in-person and remotely.

These trends point to a significant portion of the region's youth who are disconnected from both education and the workforce. Those who are employed are typically concentrated in industries and occupations that tend to offer lower wages and limited career pathways for advancement. These trends underscore the need for targeted interventions to reengage young adults and support their transition to education, training, and career pathways leading to sustainable employment and good jobs.

## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)- Title I**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act can be accessed at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa>. WIOA Final Rules resources are available at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/guidance>. **Title I** of WIOA defines eligibility requirements and required services available to young adults. OSY are defined as eligible young adults who are not attending any school, including secondary or post-secondary; they must be between the ages of 16 and 24 at the time of enrollment, and meet one or more other barriers further defined in the attached: **WIOA OSY Eligibility**.

OSY programming must include all elements required by WIOA, including to make the 14 Program Elements available to participants. They are further defined herein.

## **Eligibility**

The selected provider is responsible for ensuring and properly documenting eligibility for each young adult enrolled as of the contract start. Specific, defined eligibility requirements must be adhered to at all times.

Eligibility for WIOA OSY is included as an attachment to this RFP on Advance Central PA's website: <https://www.advancecentralpa.org/> named "**WIOA OSY Eligibility**" with additional information available in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B).

Providers must refer young adults who do not meet OSY eligibility requirements to appropriate programs to meet the skills and training needs of the youth as well as community programs to meet holistic needs.

## **Program Locations/PA CareerLink® Locations**

Providers will be partners in the PA CareerLink® network in Central PA. Associated costs for one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) within these facilities are pre-determined. PA CareerLink® locations are as follows.

### **PA CareerLink® Centre County**

240 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte

### **PA CareerLink® Clinton County**

8 North Grove Street, Suite F, Lock Haven

### **PA CareerLink® Columbia/Montour Counties**

415 Central Road, Suite 2, Bloomsburg

### **PA CareerLink® Lycoming County**

329 Pine Street, Williamsport

### **PA CareerLink® Mifflin County**

6395 SR 103 North, MCIDC Plaza, Building 58, Lewistown

### **PA CareerLink® Northumberland/Snyder/Union Counties**

225 Market Street, Sunbury

Advance Central PA also has a mobile unit, referred to as **The Link** which is certified as a specialized site. All core PA CareerLink® program staff are welcome to schedule time with the procured operator of The Link, to take services into communities.

## **Problem Statement**

### Reaching Young Adults

Young adults are generally unfamiliar with the PA CareerLink® network and programs within, including the OSY program, which means we're not connecting with the broad range of young adults who are eligible for OSY services. Efforts to increase visibility to the OSY age group (16-24) are necessary, including via outreach that shows young adults the services that might be relevant to them. The procured provider must determine the most effective outreach methods for this age group to ensure the program is well-known to eligible young adults in the Central Region and leads to them accessing services.

Reaching young adults ready and willing to utilize the services available is critical. Eligibility requires that barriers exist and a provider must be willing and ready to provide resources and tools needed to assist each individual in overcoming barriers so they can set and meet workforce goals.

In some cases, eligible young adults interested in the OSY program have severe and/or urgent barriers that would prevent successful engagement in workforce programming. These individuals may need intensive support from other agencies before being able to successfully engage in WIOA OSY services. Expert program staff must be able to identify these situations prior to enrollment and help connect these young adults with other resources that can address their immediate critical needs. These individuals should be encouraged to return to the OSY program when they are able to fully engage.

Advance Central PA will review and approve suitability tools to help determine if a young adult is suitable for the program, in addition to determining program eligibility. It is critical that providers are expert in implementing recruitment strategies to find and engage the disconnected young people with barriers who can use the services available under OSY to meet workforce goals.

#### Barrier Remediation

Young Adults who enroll in the OSY program must receive services within a model centered on the whole person and their needs. Individuals with barriers must receive assistance in overcoming them so they are able to obtain and persist in OSY services and education/employment. This requires providers to be adept in making successful connections to other organizations and services in the local area, such as the housing authority or a community action agency. The selected provider must be able to readily connect to community resources and advocate for the OSY as needed, to assist them in overcoming challenges.

#### Outcomes

Attainment of desired outcomes is critical, including Common Measure Performance and local metrics defined by Advance Central PA. Services of the highest quality and relevance must be provided to support young adults in setting their goals and meeting them. It is equally critical that the program provider is expert in accurate and timely data entry within the integrated system of record used by the Commonwealth, CWDS. Untimely and/or inaccurate data entry can lead to failed performance.

#### Summary

With this procurement, Advance Central PA seeks solutions from collaborative-minded organizations poised to immediately make a positive impact by implementing successful outreach strategies that increase program registrations and enroll participants who are able to fully engage in program activities and services to obtain work experience, training, and ultimately employment that sustains them.

### **1.3 Outcome Goal Overview**

The successful provider will address each of the following broad goals.

#### **Individual Outcomes/Common Measure Performance**

Each year, Advance Central PA negotiates with the PA Dept. of Labor & Industry to define the targets for the following Common Measure performance metrics which the selected provider must meet or exceed: Employment 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit, Employment 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit, Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit, Credential Attainment Rate, Measurable Skill Gain, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. Related is the following:

- **Expert data entry**- technical expertise and accurate and timely data entry into the Commonwealth's system of record is critically related to Common Measure performance.

## **Recruitment and Engagement**

Effective outreach and recruitment are required and must result in increased engagement with and registration of young adults who will benefit from the available services.

## **Meaningful and Impactful Service Delivery**

Advance Central PA requires services to be tailored to the young adult. Provision of services must include both accessible in-person and remote options that allow the person to develop goals, overcome barriers, participate in paid work activities, and increase skills related to success in the workplace. Since these are young adults, it is also critical to give ample opportunities to relevantly connect with peers who are also in the programming. Outstanding customer service is a requirement. Evidence of effective and meaningful service delivery is required, including within the case file, and the system of record, including the case progress notes.

## **1.4 Award Terms**

### **Number of Contracts**

Advance Central PA competitively seeks one or more qualified providers to deliver WIOA Title I OSY Program Services for the following counties: Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union. This request may use the singular form of proposer, provider, etc. although Advance Central PA may choose to select more than one proposal/provider. Advance Central PA will determine the number of contracts awarded based on proposals received.

### **Availability of Funds**

A cost-reimbursement contract will be finalized during contract negotiations with the successful respondent.

The following funding budget is an estimate provided for planning purposes and is the amount available for WIOA Title I OSY Program Services across the entirety of Central PA. The amount includes shared costs of being located in the PA CareerLink® referred to as “PA CareerLink® FTE Costs” on the **RFP Budget Template**. Per WIOA, 20% must be spent on allowable work experience, leaving 80% of the budget for other operations.

The actual allocation for the contract period will be negotiated with the selected provider and will be contingent on funding.

Estimated Budget: \$1,000,000

Advance Central PA reserves the option to modify contracts on a year-to-year basis. Funding for subsequent years of the contract will be determined on an annual basis and may increase or decrease based on annual funding allocations.

All activities, services, facilities and/or equipment, including leased items, which will be subcontracted by the proposer, must be competitively procured following applicable regulations.

Advance Central PA has final approval of all contract costs before budget funds are made available and dispersed.

### **Leveraging Resources**

Proposers are strongly encouraged to leverage both financial and programmatic resources, including to partner with other organizations to maximize funding. Proposers are also strongly encouraged to prove they will match awarded funding with cash and in-kind donations. Examples include other grants and staff assigned to this project who are funded in whole or part through a non-WIOA Title I source.

## **Contracting Period**

Funds released through this RFP will be contracted to provide services in the Central Region from July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027, with an option to extend funding annually for up to three years through June 30, 2030, based on successful performance outcomes, fiscal integrity, compliance, and available funding.

## **Adherence to Federal, State, and Local Policy**

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

## **Section 2: Scope of Work**

Advance Central PA expects services to adhere to the goals and performance metrics outlined in this RFP. The following scope of work is aligned with WIOA Common Measures and additional local performance measures and goals which ultimately are tied to the overarching goal of connecting individuals to long-term employment with family-sustaining wages.

The selected provider will guide young adults to success in transitioning to employment, post-secondary training/education, or the military based on individual goals. Placement is essential and Advance Central PA expects that young adults leave the OSY program with placement and a clear career pathway plan.

Therefore, the program design must help young adults connect to employment and/or education by guiding them along a structured framework of services and activities while allowing for flexibility targeted to each individual. Connections to employers are essential to effectively assist youth to become highly skilled and employable. These connections should lead to placements in employment as well as meaningful exposure to the world of work with resulting in measurable skill increases. Proposers are expected to collaborate to ensure youth can experience relevant and realistic career exploration, job shadowing, internships, mentoring, on-the-job training and volunteer opportunities.

Advance Central PA values a program design that will help young adults reach their full potential. That program design must be connected to the full array of services available through the PA CareerLink® system.

### Assumption of Existing Caseload

Proposers are expected to assume full responsibility for providing continued services to young adults on the existing caseload, including up to 12 months of follow-up for young adults who have been exited from the program.

### Project Duration

Enrollment length will vary based on the needs of the youth, approved program design, and funding availability. The selected provider will offer an intensive program that places each young adult in employment as soon as there is a demonstrated readiness and defined career path. Youth are expected to receive services from the point of initial enrollment/contract commencement through employment and during the 12 months of follow-up.

## **2.1 Services to be Provided**

### **Customer Service-Centered Staffing**

The selected provider will employ enough staff to effectively deliver high-quality, compliant services that result in customer satisfaction. Staff will be customer service oriented and provide services with a smile. Staff must be trained to work with young adults with employment barriers; and receive ongoing staff training

grounded in proven best practices, such as motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, and de-escalation tactics. The provider will adhere to all current laws including those for background checks and clearances. All staff must have no record on the following: Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Records Check (Act 34), Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance (Act 151), and Federal Criminal History Record.

Staffing requirements include the following.

#### **OSY Supervisory Staff**

The selected provider is responsible for hiring supervisory staff who will oversee program staff and operations. Supervisory staff will be the main point of contact between the program and Advance Central PA, and will ensure that all local, state, and federal guidelines and policies are followed. Advance Central PA will consider various supervisory structures.

#### **OSY Case Management Staff**

The selected provider is responsible for hiring front line, case management staff who will provide responsive, engaging, relevant case management and overall service delivery to registered participants both during the active program and follow-up phases of the program. Staff must be certified or specially trained to work with young adults with employment barriers.

Case management will serve the needs of young adults according to their Individual Service Strategies (ISS), which is further defined herein, and immediate needs. Staff will be trained to recognize how to meet individual participants where they are and help them move forward. A holistic approach will be taken to ensure that if participants require non-workforce assistance in order to succeed, intentional warm referrals will be made to experts in the required areas, e.g. food, housing, mental health supports, etc.

Case management will have an approach that empowers young adults to recognize possible discrepancies in their career plan and to focus and lead them to determine the best course of action and next steps.

It is recommended the proposed title of staff is something other than “case manager” and should help promote a first impression that is both professional and workforce relevant.

#### **Other Staff**

Proposed staffing models may include other staff aligned with Advance Central PA’s goals for the program. Examples of other staff include but are not limited to positions such as the following: wellness coaches who focus on emotional and mental health, and data entry staff responsible for timely and accurate data entry.

### **Intentional Recruitment and Effective Outreach**

Providers will be responsible for the recruitment of eligible young adults and are expected to include innovative outreach and contact techniques, making programs age appropriate while encouraging young adult participation and feedback into continuous program improvements. Recruitment will include methods and networks to ensure enrollment from the broad spectrum of allowable eligibility while also assessing readiness for workforce programming. The result should be registration of the expected number of OSY participants each quarter who are fully utilizing services and progressing to meet their goals.

### **Objective Assessment**

Provide for an objective assessment of each youth participant that meets the requirements of WIOA sec. 129(c)(1)(A) and includes a review of the academic and occupational skill levels, as well as the service needs and strengths, of each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants. This includes but is not limited to a review of basic skills, prior work experience,

employability skills, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs of the young adult and their families, and developmental needs.

Advance Central PA requires a comprehensive assessment of social indicators of health via a family needs assessment. This should be completed as part of the objective assessment and revisited regularly allowing the young person to prioritize needs and address them with support and guidance from the program. Improvement in social indicators of health must be measured and reported.

The objective assessment will be used to inform the Individual Service Strategy (ISS.)

## **Individual Service Strategy (ISS)**

The Individual Service Strategy (ISS), required by WIOA, will be key to the overall case management strategy and on-going development and re-assessment of goals. Proposers must agree to work collaboratively with each young adult to help them develop a written plan of long and short-term goals addressing educational, employment and individual development priorities, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services for the participant. The provider will ensure the ISS is a living document that is referred to during service meetings with young adults. The ISS must directly link to performance. The Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) ISS will be used for WIOA OSY, no other versions of an ISS are acceptable.

## **Access to the 14 Program Elements**

The 14 Program Elements must be available to all OSY participants within the proposed framework for service delivery. They are listed as follows with definitions and/or important expectations, considerations, and reference to policy of Advance Central PA.

**1) Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention/recovery strategies**

Must lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.

**2) Alternative secondary school services or dropout services**

Alternative secondary school services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education. Dropout recovery services, in this case, would consist of helping participants earn their high school equivalency.

**3) Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences**

WIOA requires 20% of funds to be spent on opportunities to gain work experiences that have as a component, academic and occupational education which may include paid pre-work experiences, paid internships, on-the-job training, job shadowing, and pre-apprenticeship programs. See TEGL 21-16 and TEGL 8-15 which describe the allowable expenditures that may be included toward the 20%. The provider will be expected to help young adults understand more about themselves and their career goals as a result of these opportunities.

Advance Central PA's existing policy is that pre-paid work experience and paid internship should be available to all young adults, for up to 240 hours, and pay \$12-15 per hour, based on the position and industry. On-the-Job Training Contracts are strongly encouraged, especially for young adults who have work experience. Advance Central PA will hold funds for WIOA Title I OSY OJTs. Evidence of ability to collaborate is a necessity since the selected provider will work with the PA CareerLink® Business Services Team to connect young adults with employers.

Proposals may include new and different means of offering paid work experience as well. Consider the following.

- a. Individual placements linked to career goals
- b. Internships where the employer pays a portion of the participant wages
- c. Team service learning projects where youth are led through a variety of short-term and long-term projects with multiple agencies
- d. Wrap around activities that provide academic enrichment, leadership development opportunities, mentoring and/or work readiness instruction

4) **Occupational skills training**  
Shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors.

5) **Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation**  
Workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training are to be taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway. Leveraging of external programs is encouraged.

6) **Leadership development opportunities**  
May include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, civic engagement and activities that place youth in a leadership role.

7) **Supportive services**  
Supportive services will be offered to participants based on need. The provider will be expected to seek and exhaust such services through referrals to other community organizations prior to using WIOA funds. The **Advance Central PA Youth Support Services Policy** can be found attached.

8) **Adult mentoring**  
Implemented during the period of participation and for no less than 12 months; must be provided by an adult other than the case manager.

9) **Comprehensive guidance and counseling**  
May include drug and alcohol abuse counseling as well as referrals to services provided by partner programs, as appropriate.

10) **Financial literacy education**  
Supporting ability of participants to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, or other savings goals; see WIOA sec. 129(b)(2)(D) for additional activities.

11) **Entrepreneurial skills training**  
Education and information regarding the development of small businesses.

12) **Labor market information (LMI) services**  
Labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the Central Region and should be incorporated into the program design elements related to career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

13) **Activities that help prepare youth for transition to postsecondary education and training**  
The provider will provide activities focused on helping young adults navigate technical and academic requirements for postsecondary training and education such as test preparation and financial aid navigation.

14) **Follow-up services**  
The **Advance Central PA Youth Follow-Up Policy** is attached and outlines that the selected provider is responsible for providing 12 months of follow up for all young adults who have been exited from the program including to:

- a. Assist young adults with overcoming barriers that may interfere with the achievement of their employment or education objectives
- b. Facilitate communication and problem resolution between employers and young adults
- c. Link the young adult to PA CareerLink®, partners and referral network services to support advancement to better jobs or education and training
- d. Contact young adults based on a predetermined follow-up contact schedule that occurs frequently enough to address issues

## **Comprehensive Individualized Services**

Registered young adults will have ready and intentional access to comprehensive case management and overall service delivery. Proposers are responsible for ensuring a majority of each day involves staff spending time with enrolled young adults facilitating quality activities including WIOA Required Elements, providing case management, helping young adults develop and revise goals and plans, and providing all other aspects of the program including warm referrals to partners to meet each individual's needs.

Both in-person service delivery and remote service delivery must be robust providing equal opportunity.

When considering effective service delivery models, proposers should take the following into consideration.

- a. Feedback from young adults
- b. Provision of relevant opportunities for young adults to meet together in groups to facilitate shared career exploration and peer support/networking
- c. Help young adults define goals in an attainable way and outline them into career pathways
- d. Encourage young adults to maintain participation in the program
- e. Have an overall young adults-centered approach so that individuals know what's in it for them and are supported throughout the journey to placement and beyond
- f. Achieve performance targets

## **Intensive, Comprehensive Case Management**

Provider is responsible for providing intensive and on-going case management. Case management will be engaging and based on the needs of individual young adults according to the ISS and immediate needs. Case management will have an approach that guides young adults to recognize possible discrepancies in their thinking and lead them to determine on their own what the best course of action and next steps will be.

## **Career Exploration, Development, and Work Readiness Services**

The proposed design will incorporate individualized services including activities, as required, to help young adults learn about who they are and how their interests, skills and experiences relate to career goals. Career exploration is valued as extremely important so that young adults learn about opportunities they may not have considered or previously been aware of. Career pathway planning is an expectation.

## **Expert Data Management and Case File Management**

The Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) is the system of record for all WIOA funded programs in Pennsylvania. The provider will be required to record and track all youth activities, program services, case notes, and outcomes for WIOA OSY in CWDS. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure on-going staff expertise and cooperation. Data entry is directly related to Common Measures performance. Additionally, hard copy case files are required in Pennsylvania. Confidentiality policies must be strictly adhered to.

In addition, providers will be asked to provide additional documentation or information not accessible through CWDS in order to evaluate performance outcomes as well as program strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, providers will be required to input data into Excel spreadsheets Advance Central PA will

develop and house on a Microsoft SharePoint website. SharePoint allows users to upload information onto secure websites and will allow real-time data to be collected and available for all OSY participants.

Proposers are responsible for maintaining and securing participant case files at all times. Included in the files are regular maintenance of forms and documentation of activities. The case files will include identification and contact information, eligibility documentation, assessment information, supportive service needs, documentation of customer contacts and other forms required by Advance Central PA, the PA Department of Labor & Industry, and the PA Department of Human Services. Case files are the property of Advance Central PA and must be available at all times for review. Files must be retained for three years after Advance Central PA reports final expenditures to the US Department of Labor. Advance Central PA's policy regarding personal identifiable information will be strictly adhered to at all times.

### **Collaboration as an Integrated Partner in the PA CareerLink®**

The selected provider will work within the collaborative, integrated PA CareerLink® model and connect individuals to other programs, services, and offerings in their best interests. Proposers are expected to demonstrate ability to collaborate with partners to provide resources and services to young adults to meet their comprehensive needs and ultimately support attainment of their goals and Common Measure outcomes, including co-enrollments in other PA CareerLink® programs as appropriate.

The selected provider will work closely with all partners in the PA CareerLink® in delivering job readiness, job search, job placement assistance and basic or academic skills instruction. This includes for example, collaboration with the local Adult Basic Education (ABE) WIOA Title II providers basic to refer OSY participants for co-enrollment services where applicable and partner and collaborate with Title II to assist the young adult in achieving success in meeting all of their goals.

In another example, collaboration with the PA CareerLink® Business Services Team (BST) is essential in order to connect young adults to meaningful work and to be sure they are receiving services to help them become highly skilled and employable according to local industry demands. For example, when the BST is hosting a recruitment event, or a large job fair, the selected provider is required to connect OSY to those opportunities. These connections should lead to placements in employment as well as meaningful exposure to the world of work with resulting measurable skill increases.

### **Performance**

Meeting and exceeding performance is expected. See Section 2.2 for more information.

### **Capacity for Related Projects**

Advance Central PA regularly seeks funding to supplement WIOA Title I monies. While the funders and projects change over time, Advance Central PA partners with the competitively procured OSY Program provider(s) to facilitate delivery of services associated with current related projects.

Therefore, in addition to flexibility and adaptability related to program management, the successful respondent will be one willing to take on new challenges and projects working collaboratively with Advance Central PA when and if new funds are available to serve OSY.

### **TANF Youth Development Program (TANF YDP)**

If and when available, the successfully procured provider may receive a specified **TANF Youth Development Program** allocation to utilize to provide services to an expanded OSY population in accordance with all TANF YDP eligibility and programmatic requirements.

## 2.2 Performance Metrics and Contract Management

### WIOA Common Measures

The selected provider agrees to meet all required measures and will begin to immediately incorporate service delivery that would result in positive outcomes for each of the WIOA Common Measures. Negotiated rates for each measure in PY25 are included in the chart below.

Metric	Definition	Target
Education and Employment Rate- Second Quarter after Exit	The percentage of Title I Youth program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program.	70%
Education and Employment Rate - Fourth Quarter after Exit	The percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.	70%
Median Earnings – Second Quarter after Exit	Median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit	\$4,000
Credential Attainment Rate	Percent of participants enrolled in education/training program who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma/ equivalent during participation or within one year after exit.	56%
Measurable Skills Gain	Percent of participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.	68.5%

### Additional Local Performance Measures and Goals

In addition to the WIOA Common Measures, the selected applicant must meet or exceed locally valued performance measures and goals as shown below. Final metrics will be negotiated with the successful respondent prior to contract execution.

Metric	Data Source	Frequency of Review	Entity Responsible for Data Progress Reporting
<b>OSY Program Registrations</b> <i>Number of new individuals registered for and ready for/committed to OSY services</i>	CWDS and SharePoint Tracking Sheet	Monthly	Provider
<b>Successful Paid Work Experience Completion</b> <i>Number of participants placed in Paid Internship and On-the-Job Training who successfully complete; Number of participants who receive paid work experience aligned with the provided budget; compliance with 20%</i>	CWDS and SharePoint Tracking Sheet	Monthly	Provider

<i>expenditures is required to be maintained throughout the program year.</i>			
<b>Job Shadow Placements</b> <i>Number of participants who participate and complete a job shadow in a field of interest</i>	CWDS and SharePoint Tracking Sheet	Monthly	Provider
<b>Improvement to Social Indicators of Health</b> <i>Percentage of participants who report improvement in social indicators of health based on a family needs assessment</i>	Family Needs Assessment Tracking Sheet	Quarterly	Provider
<b>Positive Program Exits</b> <i>Percentage of participants who exit programming with positive outcomes: entered employment/military, entered training with minimal to no cases of lost contact</i>	CWDS	Quarterly	Advance Central PA and Provider

## Other Local Indicators of Success

Other indicators of success that Advance Central PA expects the selected provider to maintain include the following, non-exhaustive list.

- Improved career readiness such as via demonstrated skills attainment in digital literacy or soft skills; tools such as SkillUp™ PA can and should be utilized
- High quality, compliant OSY case files with all necessary documentation
- Evidence of responsive effective services within CWDS case notes and services as well as the OSY case file documents
- Error-free, strength based, career portfolio information, including effective participant resumes in CWDS
- Innovation and adaptability as evidenced by creative and innovative strategies which result in solid job placement rates and retention rates
- Commitment to execution of the approved program design as demonstrated by the information in the ISS and the case file as well as CWDS and other required reports
- Participant satisfaction

## Contract Performance Monitoring

Advance Central PA is committed to working closely with the selected provider to ensure successful implementation of both WIOA and locally defined goals. This will be achieved through consistent communication, progress tracking, and proactive collaboration to address challenges and course correct as needed. Reliable and relevant data is necessary to drive service improvements, facilitate compliance, inform trends to be monitored, and evaluate results and performance.

Intentional communication is critical to success. Following are specific reporting and communication expectations with additional information to be determined. Advance Central PA is committed to providing technical assistance on an as-needed basis. Scheduled formal reporting as listed below does not replace necessary real time touch points.

### Collaborative Grant Management Meetings

Advance Central PA staff will hold a formal grant management meeting each month to review an agenda that includes performance data, challenges, successes, customer service, and other pertinent information to service delivery and the contract. The provider will collaboratively and actively participate with enthusiasm for continuous improvement.

### Performance Analysis

Each quarter, the selected provider will review the Common Measure denominator report provided by Advance Central PA which shows all OSY included in the metrics. The provider is responsible for reviewing each case and providing clear report/discussion regarding trends, best practices, underlying issues, and corrective actions.

### Self-Monitoring

On a quarterly schedule, the provider will submit a formal self-monitoring report to Advance Central PA using a template provided, outlining summaries of the following items completed during the quarter:

- Professional development activities completed by program staff
- Outreach and Recruitment activities to initiate or maintain partnerships, connect with local agencies, and connect with eligible young adults who could benefit from program services
- Internal monitoring activities, including but not limited to routine file/ desk reviews, risk response activities, performance monitoring, paid internship site monitoring, and follow up to local monitoring performed by Advance Central PA
- Participant-focused, group-activity program events delivered to foster the formation of peer networks
- Progress toward common measure goals and goals program goals
- Best practices and program highlights

## Section 3: RFP Process and Submittal Instructions

### 3.1 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 and/or capacity to deliver programs to the identified eligible adult population. The following entities are encouraged to apply: (not limited to)

- Education entities, including school districts or Career and Technology Centers (CTCs)
- Community-based organizations, social service agencies, public housing agencies, probation departments or other related programs serving adults
- PA CareerLink® partners
- Other for- or not-for-profit organizations

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 according to the attached Agreement of Basic Requirements.

## 3.2 Timeline

Please see **RFP Summary and Timeline** on page 3. Proposals are due no later than 4:00 p.m. EST on February 27, 2025.

## 3.3 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:

Allison Grose, Youth Programs Coordinator: [agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org](mailto:agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org)

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

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

See **RFP Summary and Timeline** on page 3 for more information.

## 3.4 Proposal Content

Responses must be submitted using the provided templates. Do not submit attachments that are not specifically requested. Do not include links to external information. Definitions that must be used for completing the requested budget narrative and Excel sheet are included in the **RFP Appendix- Budget Definitions**.

### Checklist

A checklist is provided within the template. Complete it to be sure you are submitting all required materials. Do not submit materials or attachments that are not requested.

## 3.5 Submission Instructions

Proposals **saved as a PDF** (not scanned) or Microsoft Word document along with the **Budget Template** in the Excel format provided (do not save as PDF) must be submitted electronically to: [agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org](mailto:agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org) with the following subject line: **RE: Out-of-School Youth Services Proposal**.

Late submissions will not be considered.

## Section 4: Selection and Award Process

Advance Central PA procurement processes are compliant with all federal and state regulations.

### 4.1 Review Process

The review process includes the following steps.

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 the contract being procured.

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

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.

## 4.2 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criterion	Points	The Highest Scoring Proposals will Reflect the Following
Organizational Qualifications, Relevant Experience, and Capacity	20 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organization is uniquely qualified to take on this scope of work</li><li>Demonstrates qualifications, success, and relevant experience in delivering similar programs.</li><li>References are those who can attest to ability to perform the work and meet deliverables similar in scope to this RFP.</li></ul>
Staffing Plan	25 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The proposed leadership structure and qualifications are sufficient; there is demonstrated commitment to high-quality service in the Central Region; bios support the strength of the leadership team aligned with the scope of work.</li><li>Qualifications of key staff positions are clearly aligned with program outcomes and goals; bios and key qualifications align with the scope of work.</li><li>Demonstrated capacity to take on this work as described.</li><li>Plans for new enrollments and staff caseloads are sufficient. A breakdown for all 6 PA CareerLink® sites distinguishing between active and follow-up young adults is realistic and sufficient. The efficiency of the staffing model and how the caseloads will be manageable is clearly described and realistic.</li><li>Employee recruitment and retention plans are adequate and there are plans to resolve anticipated challenges.</li></ul>
Program Recruitment Strategies	25 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstrated success with recruitment strategy is evident; challenges and lessons learned along with how those lessons will be applied are adequate.</li><li>Strategy for recruitment is comprehensive and effective in meeting the goals to increase foot-traffic and program registrations including targeted populations and the full spectrum of eligibility outlined in the RFP.</li><li>Example outreach piece is engaging and aligned with the intent of the RFP; justification regarding how it will be successful is adequate.</li></ul>

Service Delivery/Program Design	75 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The narrative and attached visual description of the proposed program flow/model is clear, compliant, and demonstrates understanding of Title I services within an integrated PA CareerLink® model. Services are clearly available both in-person and remotely.</li> <li>A clear and adequate plan is provided outlining how meaningful services will be delivered to young adults in a flexible manner. The example provided is acceptable and aligned with the scope of work/expectations.</li> <li>Plans to provide continuous service delivery are comprehensive, compliant, and will lead to participant satisfaction and success.</li> <li>Plans to partner/coordinate with other entities to best accomplish the goals of this program and work within an integrated PA CareerLink® as well as with community partners are clear and adequate.</li> <li>A sufficient plan describes how paid work and pre-work experiences will be incorporated into the program model, and the 20% expenditure requirement will be met with priority on the direct participant wages (versus allowable staff time, etc.)</li> <li>The overall case management strategy is grounded in proven best practices and correlates to positive outcomes.</li> <li>The plan provided for ensuring staff spend adequate time with program participants and performing their other job duties demonstrates a sufficient understanding of the program requirements.</li> <li>Response to case study 1 is aligned with the scope of work, outstanding young-adult-centric customer service, and outcomes. It addresses: OSY program elements/services that will be offered/delivered along with plans to overcome transportation barriers and services to be delivered to address desire to explore careers in healthcare.</li> <li>Response to case study 2 is aligned with the scope of work, outstanding young-adult-centric customer service, and outcomes. It addresses: OSY program elements/services that will be offered/delivered along with plans for collaboration within the PA CareerLink®, specifically Title II, support to overcome anxiety leading to enroll in class and persistence to successfully testing, balancing class and work, and transitioning to sustaining employment.</li> </ul>
Project Management and Performance	40 Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed approach to program management demonstrates alignment with the goals in the RFP and is intentionally focused on continuous improvement.</li> <li>There is a clear outline of <u>how</u> services and strategies will ensure positive outcomes for WIOA Common Measures and the additional performance indicators.</li> <li>There is evidence of ability to meet positive outcomes for WIOA Common Measures</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a clear and competent plan for proper staff training, ensuring compliance with WIOA and accurate data management and timely data entry into CWDS, with plans for management oversight and monitoring.</li> </ul>
Budget	65 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed budget/budget justification includes allowable costs that support the stated objectives and activities and is reasonable and compliant with the maximum amount available per the RFP for services in all counties.</li> </ul>
Total Points Possible = 250		

## Section 5: Disclaimer

Advance Central PA reserves the right to cancel or modify this request for proposal or the scope or funding of an approved program 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 than 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 program records, program materials, staff and participants. In addition, providers are required to maintain all program records for three years after Advance Central PA submits the final expenditure report to the US Department of Labor.

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 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.