



## **RFP Technical Assistance – Questions and Answers Central Region EARN Program**

**Q1.** On the EARN RFP Budget template, under Program, Personnel, will you please add more lines?

**Answer:** Yes, a revised template has been uploaded to the Advance Central PA website. Please find it named as follows: RFP Budget Template- EARN (rev).

**Q2.** What is the historical 'Carry Over' enrollment for the EARN program from the current program year? Will the selected provider be responsible for existing participants immediately on July 1, or is there a ramp-up period for new enrollments?

**Answer:** The last four years of data show an average of 267 carryovers per program year. The selected provider will be responsible for providing seamless service delivery to all carryover participants.

**Q3.** What are the historical performance trends for '6-month job retention' in this region for EARN participants? Does Advance Central PA have a target 'self-sufficiency wage' threshold they prefer to see in placements?

**Answer:** The last three program years have an average 6-month job retention of 46%. Advance Central PA values proposals that will prepare EARN participants for success in a career pathway that offers a self-sufficiency wage. Participants must exit the EARN program with employment at \$2.00 per hour higher than the minimum wage (currently \$9.25/hour) to align with DHS performance standards.

**Q4.** Can a provider utilize their own proprietary career assessment tools alongside the state-mandated assessments, or must we strictly use the state-provided systems for the initial Individual Service Strategy (ISS)?

**Answer:** EARN uses an IEP (Individual Employment Plan) in the system of record. Career assessment tools designed to help an EARN participant learn more about themselves are welcome and should result in updates to the IEP as appropriate.

**Q5.** How does the Board view 'mobile' service delivery? Would a proposal that includes community-based meeting spots (libraries, etc.) to assist those with transportation barriers be seen as innovative or a compliance risk?

**Answer:** Advance Central PA requires EARN to be strategically located as integrated partners of the one-stop PA CareerLink® network. Transportation barriers are prevalent, and innovative ideas to best serve participants are required; for example remote offerings are required. A proposal that includes community-based meeting spots would be welcome and should include proper justification; such meeting spots should be in addition to integration within the PA CareerLink®.

**Q6.** The RFP mentions 'in-person and remote delivery of services.' Is there a preferred ratio for virtual coaching versus in-person sessions at PA CareerLink® sites, especially for rural counties like Snyder or Union?

**Answer:** Advance Central PA values a balanced approach to in-person and remote delivery of services in the best interest of the individuals being served and both are required. The current Incentive Services Policy recognizes the value of on-site participation at least once weekly each month.

**Q7.** For providers with established remote coaching models, how does Advance Central PA view the balance between required in-person presence at PA CareerLink® sites and remote service delivery? Are there specific minimum 'office hours' required per county?

**Answer:** Advance Central PA values a balanced approach to in-person and remote delivery of services in the best interest of the individuals being served and both are required. The current Incentive Services Policy recognizes the value of on-site participation at least once weekly each month. PA CareerLink® should be the home base for EARN staff. Minimum office hours are not required, however, as an integrated partner in the PA CareerLink, EARN staff do support shared operations, such as coverage of the front- desk as needed, etc. It is anticipated that EARN staff should be present in the sites daily.

**Q8.** Is there an expected 'Transition Period' budget for July 1st, or must the provider be at full operational capacity with a complete staff on day one of the contract?

**Answer:** Advance Central PA will negotiate this with the selected provider as necessary to minimize any negative impact to operations including service delivery and customer experience.

**Q9.** For the 'Licensed Counseling/Wellness' requirement in EARN, does the Board prefer these services to be integrated into daily case management, or should they be treated as a separate, referable track?

**Answer:** Licensed Counseling/Wellness services must be offered to all participants. Respondents are welcome to propose any model that will align with DHS expectations in the EARN Manual and the scope of work, performance, etc. as outlined in the RFP.

**Q10.** Does Advance Central PA expect these professionals to be full-time staff members of the provider, or is a formal subcontracting partnership with a local mental health agency preferred?

**Answer:** Advance Central PA is open to multiple staffing models, however, the respondent should successfully outline how Licensed Counseling/Wellness services will readily accessible to support participants to meet the requirements in the EARN Manual and the RFP.

**Q11:** There is a formula error on the 'Projected EARN Budget Jul 2027' tab. Under the program section, it looks as if "other" is not included in the calculation for the total. Should we note that in our final proposal submission?

**Answer:** Thank you for bringing this mistake to our attention. We will correct the calculation upon receipt of the budget so that a provider does not need to unnecessarily input everything into a corrected workbook. Advance Central PA will send a copy back to the respondent with the calculation corrected for their records.