



TANF YD In-School Youth Program

Request for Proposals for the Central Region- RE-RELEASE

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

Issue Date: July 1, 2026

Submission Deadline: July 31, 2026

Advance Central PA is an 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-notice/>

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

Advance Central PA is re-issuing this RFP to competitively select one or more qualified providers to deliver high quality, effective services that prepare high school students for life after graduation. While individual activities can vary in length based on individual student needs and interests, programming must be offered continuously throughout the calendar year, including summer. The overall program design must provide individualized, year-round activities that have clearly defined outcomes and allow students to gain stackable workforce skills preparing them for successful futures whether they pursue post-secondary education, the military, or direct entry into the workforce.	
RFP Issue Date	July 1, 2026
Deadline for Questions	July 20, 2026 Email to: agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org and klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org
Answers Posted www.AdvanceCentralPA.org	On a rolling basis, within 4 business days of receipt
Notify Advance Central PA of Intent to Submit Proposal by	July 10, 2026 Email to: agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org and klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org
Proposals Due	July 31, 2026, 5:00 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: agrose@AdvanceCentralPA.org and klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org
RFP Website	www.AdvanceCentralPA.org
RFP Official Contact	Allison Grose, Advance Central PA Youth Programs Coordinator
Notification on Status of Proposals	August 14, 2026
Anticipated Contract Start	September 1, 2026
Anticipated Contract Length	September 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 career-readiness programming to eligible In-School Youth who are enrolled in priority public school districts across the 9-county Central Region via an In-School Youth program. The Central Region includes the following counties: Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union.

Programming must help eligible In-School Youth (ISY) take charge of the trajectory of their lives through services such as career awareness, assessment, goal development, skill attainment, leadership development, first-hand exposure to career exploration experiences and career pathways, and barrier remediation.

This programming will be funded by and will follow all guidelines and requirements of TANF Youth Development (TANF YD), including eligibility qualifications. In-School Youth, hereafter referred to as “ISY”, are defined as eligible youth who are aged 12-24, have proof of a social security number, proof of identity, are a U.S. citizen or TANF-eligible non-citizen, PA resident, and have a personal monthly gross earned income that does not exceed 235% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. In addition, TANF YD programming emphasizes key priority populations and allowable services outlined in the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth legislation, more information is included herein.

Programming can be individualized in regard to activities offered and length of enrollment. There must be year-round opportunities for youth to enroll and engage in activities, including over summer.

Expected accomplishments and outcomes include:

- Registration of qualified ISY across allowable and targeted demographics
- Delivery of relevant and impactful services individualized to participant needs
- Clearly defined outcomes and impact for each of the program activities that will be offered
- Successful performance, including completion of meaningful program activities
- Overall compliance (e.g. data entry accuracy and timeliness, WIOA Program Elements, etc.)

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 ISY program participants. Advance Central PA utilized TANF YD funding to support the ISY programming.

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.

The Central Region has 31 public school districts, with 7 of those districts offering on-site CTE programs, in addition to 5 stand-alone Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs. Twenty-seven (27) of these school districts and CTE programs are considered Title I schools, meaning 40% or more of their students come from low-income families.

Labor force data highlights disconnection from the workforce among youth in the region. For youth ages 16–19, the labor force participation rate is 36%. Youth 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 ISY 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 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.

These trends point to a significant portion of the region's youth who come from low-income families, are disconnected from the workforce, and have significant barriers to obtaining work. These trends underscore the need for targeted interventions to engage ISY and support their transition from high school to post-secondary education, training, and career pathways leading to employment in high-priority occupations with family-sustaining wages.

TANF Youth Development

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services partners with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry to allocate and oversee the TANF YD grants. The core program elements (described herein) defined by WIOA are woven into the allowable and encouraged activities for TANF qualified youth and are highly valued by Advance Central PA. Funds are meant to ensure high-quality workforce development activities are available to low-income youth. TANF YD eligibility requirements include verification of low-income status. The most recent TANF YD Program Manual (2025-2026) and accompanying attachments are available as an attachment to the RFP on Advance Central PA's website: <https://www.advancecentralpa.org/> named "**PY25 TANF YD Program Manual**".

Eligibility

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

Eligibility for TANF ISY is thoroughly described in the **PY25 TANF YD Program Manual**.

Eligibility for TANF YD ISY must be re-established every 12 calendar months. In the event the proposal includes service delivery that extends beyond 12 months, the provider will be responsible for individually tracking youth and re-establishing eligibility. Further, the selected provider will be responsible for ensuring and properly documenting continued eligibility for each TANF YD participant carried over from the existing contract for services as part of providing seamless programming, as applicable.

Providers must refer youth who do not meet TANF YD eligibility to other programs and services to meet the skills and training needs of the youth.

TANF YD Program Eligibility is based on documented eligibility qualification of each individual. Group activities are not permissible unless every individual in that group has been properly qualified and enrolled.

Advance Central PA has historically leveraged additional funds to support group activities such as student/educator in the workplace. This RFP includes narrative and budget questions that will allow proposals to address what they would offer if those additional funds are available.

Anticipated Changes to Eligibility

Eligibility is anticipated to change from what is documented in the PY25 TANF YD Program Manual with mandated compliance by July 1, 2027 and expected steps toward implementation in Fall 2026. Income based on the individual interested participant will be phased out. Instead, policies from the state will be released in the coming weeks/months detailing eligibility based on the family and/or household. Self-certification of income will no longer be allowed at that time with back-up documentation such as paystubs from the family/household required. Additionally, the current policy that allows someone to be eligible based on 235% of poverty is anticipated to change to 200% of poverty (for the family/household). Respondents must be aware of this significant change and be prepared to implement it and overcome challenges in this regard to meet enrollment targets.

PA CareerLink® Locations

Providers will be partners in the PA CareerLink® network in Central PA. Partnership includes awareness of the overall offerings of the PA CareerLink®, participation in staff trainings and meetings, etc, The ISY provider is required to be connected to the PA CareerLink® but is not expected to be based in a PA CareerLink® since the target audience will be in local high schools. 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

330 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, including ISY, are welcome to schedule time with the procured operator of The Link, to take services into communities.

Program Locations

The selected provider will use the attached file named **Central Region School District Data** to help inform the proposed program, including targeted schools and a staffing model.

The selected provider must house direct program staff at locations convenient to serving targeted youth such as schools, existing community-based youth program facilities, or other proposed locations. Current providers have worked with school districts to secure no-cost office space within the schools during the academic year. While this allows staff to integrate into the school itself, be easily accessible to eligible students, interact with teachers and administration, foster a relationship where the school finds the program to be a helpful resource, and increase awareness of overall PA CareerLink® services, this is just one example of a successful model.

During summer, ISY staff can work from the PA CareerLink® locations across the region and/or other proposed locations.

Problem Statement

Connecting Youth to Local Career Pathways

Population in the Central Region is declining while at the same time the current workforce is aging. Local businesses need talent pipelines to fill family-sustaining jobs in critical industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and education. Solutions to bridge the gap between classroom and local career opportunities, along with clear pathways are needed so that high school graduates choose to stay local and earn competitive wages as part of the regional workforce. Providing opportunities for students to explore local career pathways and connecting them to local employers through career exploration experiences are critical steps toward accomplishing this goal.

Barrier Remediation

Students, including those targeted by TANF YD funding, often face obstacles that are challenging to navigate and overcome. Barrier remediation and a holistic approach centered on the whole person is important to youth persistence in graduating from high school, focusing on their career pathway planning, and in successfully gaining and retaining employment and any post-secondary training leading up to that employment.

The selected provider must be able to effectively assess social determinants of health/needs and readily connect youth to community resources, including to advocate for the ISY as needed, to assist them in overcoming challenges so that they persist in meeting their goals and are prepared to successfully enter into the workforce and move along a career pathway.

Targeted Reach/Impact

The Central Region is large and it can be a challenge to determine how to scale programming throughout the region to optimize the number of youth effectively served. The selected provider will have a plan that clearly justifies the schools from which students will be served so that there is maximum positive impact. The target population for this program is students in grades 9-12.

Further, it can be challenging to recruit qualified ISY from the targeted groups, including recipients of public benefits; the selected provider will have a plan to reach all eligible youth, including youth with targeted demographics described herein.

Outcomes

Attainment of desired outcomes is critical, including TANF YD goals and local metrics defined by Advance Central PA. Services of the highest quality and relevance must be provided to support ISY in setting their goals and meeting them. Providers should have well-thought out outcomes (not just outputs) for each of the key activities that will be offered. 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. The selected provider must be adept at maintaining compliance and quality at all times.

Summary

With this procurement, Advance Central PA seeks solutions from collaborative-minded organizations poised to immediately make a positive impact by implementing successful strategies that provide short or long term activities for eligible youth, including targeted demographics, that build workplace skills, experience, awareness, capacity, and connection leading to improved awareness of local career pathways and jobs with family-sustaining wages.

1.3 Outcome Goal Overview

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

Individual Outcomes/Program Performance

Each year, Advance Central PA submits a TANF YD plan to the state of Pennsylvania, which includes goals for participants and demographics served, which the selected provider must meet or exceed. In addition, technical expertise and accurate and timely data entry into the Commonwealth's system of record (CWDS) and internal tracking documents is critically related to performance.

Recruitment and Engagement

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

Meaningful and Impactful Service Delivery

Proposers should develop innovative service delivery options that:

- Consider youth feedback and are responsive to identified needs
- Include relevant opportunities for youth to meet together in groups to facilitate shared career exploration and peer support
- Help youth define goals in an attainable way and outline them into career pathways
- Encourage youth to maintain participation in the program and help them see the relevance and value to their goals
- Have an overall youth-centered approach so that individuals know what's in it for them and are supported throughout their journey of career exploration and beyond
- Achieve performance targets

1.4 Award Terms

Number of Contracts

Advance Central PA competitively seeks one or more qualified providers to deliver TANF YD ISY 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 TANF YD ISY Program Services across the entirety of the Central PA Region.

The actual allocation for the contract period will be negotiated with the selected provider and will be contingent on funding, however the proposed budget should not exceed the estimated TANF YD Budget. Proposed budgets that exceed the amount below will not be accepted.

TANF YD Budget: \$595,000

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.

As previously mentioned, Advance Central PA seeks competitive funds to leverage in support of activities for groups of students who are not qualified as TANF YD. These include activities such as student/educator in the workplace. Other examples of group activities not allowable under TANF YD unless all students in the group are made eligible include delivery of curriculum to classrooms of students. The TANF YD budget that is proposed may not include such group activities. Instead, this RFP includes narrative and budget questions that will allow proposals to address what they would offer if additional funds that do not require eligibility processes are available. **For responses to RFP questions about additional activities, assume an annual non-TANF YD activities budget of \$20,000.**

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-TANF YD source.

Contracting Period

Funds released through this RFP will be contracted to provide services in the Central Region from September 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 TANF YD requirements and additional local performance measures and goals which ultimately are tied to the overarching goal of connecting youth to local jobs that offer family-sustaining wages through short-term or long-term allowable activity and service delivery.

Program Model

Advance Central PA welcomes various program models for consideration. Program models can include but are not limited to: short-term service delivery focused on key activities that align with the youth's interests and needs, longer term comprehensive service delivery that exceeds the 12-month TANF enrollment timeline and would require re-certification of participants, or cohort based models such as camps or group projects where all youth are qualified and eligible. All program models need to offer the 14 required program elements and other local requirements outlined in this RFP.

The service delivery model must maintain a consistent focus on the whole youth and therefore include case management as a component. The delivery model must intentionally assist youth in acquiring stackable skills, workplace habits, career awareness, employability skills, and other workplace indicators of success for the long-term no matter how long the proposed program model will be. The target population for this program is students in grades 9-12. Respondents may narrow this range down; proposals can include serving ISY from any or all of these grade levels.

Assumption of Existing Caseload

Proposers are expected to assume full responsibility for intentionally providing continued services to youth on the existing caseload, effectively transitioning them to the approved program model activities and service delivery.

Program Duration

Advance Central PA welcomes innovative program designs that offer individualized options for ISY. Enrollment length will vary based on the needs of the ISY, approved program design, and funding availability. Proposals should include a clear description of plans for enrollment, including grade level and age of youth at the time of enrollment and the duration of planned services. As previously stated, short term or longer term enrollment models are welcome, but all proposed programming models must maximize resources while optimizing impact.

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 participant satisfaction. Staff must be trained to work with youth with barriers and receive ongoing 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. Advance Central PA will consider various staffing patterns including the use of part-time vs. full-time staff, shared staff, etc., but expects that an adequate amount of time is dedicated to the ISY program and dedicated to serving individual youth. In the event of a change in program

providers as a result of this RFP, Advance Central PA will require the selected provider to interview current staff for positions and to help determine appropriate staffing level and aid in the transition to benefit the youth on the current caseload.

Staffing requirements include the following.

ISY 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, including a model where the supervisor is shared across other programs if there is demonstrated ability to commit adequate time to ISY.

ISY 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 ISY.

Case management will serve the identified immediate and long-term needs of ISY. 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 ISY to recognize possible discrepancies in their career pathway plan and to focus and lead them to determine the best course of action and next steps.

Advance Central PA supports a staffing design that allows for individual staff to serve more than one district with scheduled office and appointment times on a weekly or other basis as well as other models that maximize impact. Given an increasingly smaller window of time students have free in each school day, respondents are required to consider delivery of services that accounts for this.

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.

Intentional Recruitment and Effective Outreach

Providers will be responsible for the recruitment of eligible youth and are expected to include innovative outreach and contact techniques that are age appropriate while encouraging ISY 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 ISY participants each quarter who are utilizing services and progressing to meet their goals. Target demographics are students in grades 9-12. The **PY25 TANF YD Program Manual** outlines priority demographics as listed below.

- Dependent of TANF recipient
- Dependent of SNAP recipient
- Disability
- Court involved
- Incarcerated parents
- Foster Care/aging out
- Pregnant/Parenting
- Homeless/Runaway
- Migrant
- Behind one or more grade levels
- At risk of dropping out
- Lives in Public Housing

Access to the 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements

Per the **PY25 TANF YD Program Manual**, the 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements must be available to all TANF YD ISY participants within the proposed framework for service delivery. Not all participants will want or need all Elements, and service delivery should be customizable to individual needs. 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 help participants earn their high school equivalency. Dropout recovery services are not applicable to ISY since those individuals are not attending school.

3) **Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences**

Advance Central PA's existing policy is that program-subsidized and unsubsidized paid internships should be available to all ISY. Subsidized paid internships can be up to 240 hours and pay \$12 per hour. Evidence of ability to collaborate is a necessity since the selected provider will work with the PA CareerLink® Business Solutions Team to connect ISY with employers.

Proposals may include new and different means of offering paid work experience. 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 ISY 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 TANF funds. The **Advance Central PA Youth Support Services Policy** can be found attached. The local

policy can be used as a basis for planning, however, Advance Central PA is willing to negotiate with the selected provider to adjust the policy provisions.

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 ISY 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 giving program participants the option to receive 12 months of follow-up services after program exit. Participants should be exited once they have successfully completed their chosen program activities. Follow-up services require that participants are re-qualified after 12 months of enrollment, per TANF requirements. Follow-up services based on participant need include but are not limited 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

Individualized Services

Enrolled ISY will have ready and intentional access to individualized case management and service delivery.

Case Management

Provider is responsible for providing holistic case management that wraps around the planned activities in support of the youth, including their successful completion of the activity. Case management will be engaging and based on the immediate and long-term needs of individual ISY. Case management will have an approach that guides ISY 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.

Goals and Needs Assessment

The provider is responsible for creating an assessment that identifies goals and needs of each ISY. The assessment will identify eligible youth's goals for their time in the program, strengths, barriers to employment, and family economic security. It shall be developed in collaboration with Advance Central PA.

Career Exploration, Development, and Work Readiness Services

The proposed design will incorporate individualized services including activities to help ISY 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 ISY learn about opportunities they may not have considered or previously been aware of. Career pathway planning is an expectation. Career awareness activities can include offerings such as industry-specific camp models, job shadows, or volunteer opportunities.

Work readiness services should include an emphasis on executive thinking skills critical to success in the workplace. Skills such as getting along with others, time management, problem-solving, self-control, self-motivation, adaptability, and others are extremely critical skills that should be imparted to enrolled youth.

Both tested and new innovative career exploration and work readiness offerings grounded in solid strategies are welcome and highly encouraged in proposals.

PA CareerLink® Online Enrollment

Providers will guide youth in enrolling on PA CareerLink® Online and will assist them in creating portfolio materials, including but not limited to a resume and cover letter. Provider will teach youth how to navigate the website to research both training and employment opportunities and clearly impart that enrollment online is for the long-term and can be utilized throughout their career path journey.

Expert Data Management and Case File Management

TANF YD eligible youth will have data tracked in accordance with requirements outlined in the TANF YD Manual, including documentation related to eligibility qualification and planned services. The Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) is the system of record for TANF YD enrolled participants. The provider will be required to record and track all ISY program activities, services, case notes, and outcomes for ISY in CWDS. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure on-going staff expertise and cooperation. Data entry is directly related to program performance. Additionally, hard copy case files are required in Pennsylvania. Confidentiality policies must be strictly adhered to.

In addition, Advance Central PA will require the chosen provider to collect and organize data with reports on a secure Microsoft SharePoint website. Demographics, barriers, goals, planning, referrals, planned and provided activities, and outcomes are examples of information that the provider must accurately track in a timely manner as defined by Advance Central PA.

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 Health and Human Services.

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 ISY to meet their immediate and long-term needs and ultimately support attainment of their goals, including co-enrollments in other PA CareerLink® programs as appropriate. Examples include warm handoffs to the Out-of-School Youth program if ISY participants are still in need of services following high-school graduation and referrals of ISY family members to applicable PA CareerLink® programs.

The selected provider will work closely with all partners in the PA CareerLink®, delivering career exploration activities and placement in paid work experiences, this includes for example, collaboration with the PA CareerLink® Business Solutions Team (BST), in order to connect ISY to meaningful work experiences with local businesses.

Path to Careers

Advance Central PA has developed the [Path to Careers](http://pathtocareers.org) website designed to help youth connect with local businesses. The successful provider will utilize Path to Careers to help ISY connect to experiences such as paid work experience, job shadows, and industry tours and they are expected to help the website grow in use and will promote the website as a tool that can be used by all students within Central Region school districts. pathtocareers.org

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 TANF YD monies. While the funders and projects change over time, Advance Central PA partners with the competitively procured ISY 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 ISY.

As the selected provider of TANF YD programming, Advance Central PA may also choose to partner with the provider to carry forth the functions of competitive grants that may be awarded. These include, for example, Business Education Partnership (BEP) grant projects which Advance Central PA often leverages to support and expand overall ISY programming, including to provide specific services to any student in the region. Historically, this expansion has allowed for group activities that do not require eligibility processes.

Advance Central PA's goal is to have maximum positive impact for all schools and provide resources, support, and a menu of services for all students. Services provided with competitive grants to date include group activities related to employment and/or workforce preparation skills, student/teacher in the workplace tours, coordination services for career fairs and awareness events, resume and mock interview workshop facilitation for seniors, career readiness workshops for classrooms, and drop-out aversion activities. Consider these activities when responding to RFP questions.

2.2 Performance Metrics and Contract Management

Local Performance Measures and Goals

Providers must submit proposed performance metrics and goals that align with their proposed program design. Examples of prior performance metrics include number of ISY program registrations, number of individuals that meet target populations as outlined in section 2.1, number of participants placed in paid work experience and unsubsidized employment. Final metrics will be negotiated with the successful respondent prior to contract execution based on proposed program models.

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 case files with all necessary documentation
- Evidence of responsive effective services within CWDS case notes and services as well as the case file documents
- Commitment to execution of the approved program design as demonstrated by participant case file, CWDS, and other required reports
- Participant satisfaction
- Evidence each youth receives the services needed

Contract Performance Monitoring

Advance Central PA is committed to working closely with the selected provider to ensure successful implementation of both TANF YD 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. The provider must designate a point of contact for all communication with Advance Central PA. All technical assistance questions will be sent to Advance Central PA who will research and contact the applicable bureau within Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry or Department of Human Services as necessary.

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, and other pertinent information to service delivery and the contract. The provider will collaboratively and actively participate with enthusiasm for continuous improvement.

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 ISY 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 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 youth 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
- Intermediate Units
- 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 and there must be clear fiscal or other advantage to this model.

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 5:00 p.m. EST on July 31, 2026.

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

Korrie Lucas, Assistant Director: klucas@AdvanceCentralPA.org

Answers to submitted questions will typically 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 **RFP Response Template Cover Sheet**. Complete it to be sure you are submitting all required materials.

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 with the following subject line: **RE: In-School Youth Services Proposal**.

Do not exceed the outlined page limitations; additional pages beyond the limits will not be reviewed for the purposes of award. Likewise, additional attachments will not be reviewed.

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 Executive Committee of 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
Executive Summary	20 Points	The high level overview of the proposal provides key information to understanding what services will be offered.
Organizational Qualifications, Relevant Experience, and Capacity	20 Points	- Organization is uniquely qualified to take on this scope of work - Demonstrates qualifications, success, and relevant experience in delivering similar programs. - References are those who can attest to ability to perform the work and meet deliverables similar in scope to this RFP.

Staffing Plan	25 Points	• 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. • Qualifications of key staff positions are clearly aligned with program outcomes and goals; bios and key qualifications align with the scope of work. • Plans for new enrollments and staff caseloads are sufficient. A breakdown for all service delivery sites is realistic and sufficient. The efficiency of the staffing model and how the caseloads will be manageable is clearly described and realistic. • Employee recruitment and retention plans are adequate and there are plans to resolve anticipated challenges.
Program Recruitment Strategies	25 Points	• Demonstrated success with recruitment strategy is evident; challenges and lessons learned along with how those lessons will be applied are adequate. • Strategy for recruitment is comprehensive and effective in meeting the goals to increase program registrations including targeted populations and the full spectrum of eligibility outlined in the RFP. • Responses to recruitment examples are comprehensive and engaging; answers show an understanding of the value of TANF Youth Development programming
Service Delivery/Program Design	75 Points	• The narrative and attached visual description of the proposed program flow/model is clear, compliant, includes the requested information, and demonstrates understanding of TANF Youth Development programming and services. • Description of how a Goals and Needs Assessment will drive individual case management is clear and adequate. • Plans to provide continuous service delivery are comprehensive, compliant, and will lead to participant satisfaction and success. • 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. • The overall case management strategy is grounded in proven best practices and correlates to positive outcomes. • Response to case study 1 is aligned with the scope of work, outstanding youth-centric customer service, and outcomes. It addresses ISY program elements/services and guidance that will be offered/delivered. • Response to case study 2 is aligned with the scope of work, outstanding youth-centric customer service, and outcomes. It addresses: ISY program elements/services that will be offered/delivered along with career exploration.

Project Management and Performance	40 Points	- Proposed program goals and outcomes are achievable and align with the proposed staffing and coverage plans. - Proposed approach to program management aligns with the proposed goals and outcomes, and the attached chart demonstrates alignment with the goals in the RFP and is intentionally focused on continuous improvement. - There is a clear outline of <u>how</u> services and strategies will ensure positive outcomes for TANF Youth Development and the additional performance indicators. - There is evidence of ability to meet positive outcomes. - There is a clear and competent plan for proper staff training, ensuring compliance with TANF Youth Development and accurate data management and timely data entry into CWDS, with plans for management oversight and monitoring.
Additional Project Capacity	15 points	- There is a clear summary of acceptable workforce activities that will be provided to students if funding is made available from other sources that would allow for services to groups of students who do not need to be qualified as TANF YD. Expected outputs and outcomes are acceptable. - The impact of additional funds to the TANF YD proposal is clearly outlined and is reasonable and acceptable.
Budget	65 points	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.
Total Points Possible = 285		

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.