



**LACKAWANNA COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018**

TO PROVIDE

**Employment Advancement and Retention Network
(EARN) Services
For
Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania**

Date Released: April 4, 2017

**Proposal Due Date/Time:
April 27, 2017; 12:00 P.M. (Noon)**

**At: Mr. Andrew Wallace
Lackawanna County Chief of Staff
200 Adams Avenue 6th Floor
Scranton, PA 18503**

IDENTIFIED: LACKAWANNA COUNTY WDB EARN SERVICE PROPOSAL

Bidder's Conference: Tuesday, April 11, 2017; 2:00 P.M.
PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County
135 Franklin Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS:

1. All proposals must be received by the date, time, and at the location stated on the cover page. **Late proposals will not be reviewed.**
2. Proposals must be submitted with an original (signature in blue ink) plus seven additional complete copies.

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SECTION ONE - Introduction and Instruction

1.1 Purpose of this Request for Proposals (“RFP”)

The Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board (hereinafter WDB) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from professional organizations that are interested in and capable of acting as program operator to administer an Employment, Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) project as a partner the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County as further detailed in the specifications of this RFP (inclusive of all tasks, deliverables and products required herein, as defined in Section 3).

1.2 Bidders Conference

As stated previously, a Bidders Conference will be held at the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County on Tuesday, April 11, 2017, beginning promptly at 2:00 P. M. The PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County is located at 135 Franklin Avenue, Scranton, PA 18503. The purpose of this meeting is to conduct a question and answer session regarding this RFP package to maximize the proposer’s understanding as to what is required. Any questions must be submitted in writing by 4:30 P. M., Friday, April 7, 2017, to Virginia Turano, Lackawanna County WDB Executive Director, at vturano@wiblackawanna.org. No verbal questions will be accepted during the Bidders’ Conference.

1.3 Due / Opening Dates

As previously stated, the deadline for receipt of proposals is 12:00 P.M. (NOON), local prevailing time, Thursday, April 27, 2017. **Proposals received after the Proposal Deadline will not be considered.** Proposals will be opened by the Lackawanna County Controller, or his designee, with an initial review of contents witnessed, signed, and dated.

1.4 Publications/Notifications

This RFP will be publicized through a legal advertisement in the Scranton Times/Tribune, twice, at an interval of no less than 3 days, and not less than 10 days prior to the required submission date. Also, this RFP will be posted on the following websites: www.lackawannacounty.org and www.lackawannacountycareerlink.org.

1.5 Preparation Costs

Preparation costs are not an allowable cost under this RFP.

1.6 Public Information

All Proposals and other material submitted become the property of the WDB. Information contained in the Proposals will not be disclosed during the evaluation process. Under Pennsylvania’s “Right to Know” laws (65 P.S. §§ 67.101-67.3104), public records are required to be open for reasonable inspection. All Proposal information, including detailed price and cost information, will be held in confidence during the evaluation process and prior to the time a contract is awarded. Thereafter, the Proposals will become public information.

Trade secrets and other proprietary data contained in Proposals may be held confidential, if the Proposer requests, in writing, that the WDB does so, and if the WDB so agrees, in writing, to do so. Material considered confidential by the Proposer must be clearly identified and the Proposer must include a brief statement that sets out the reasons for confidentiality.

1.7 Reservation of Rights

The WDB reserves and may, at its sole discretion, exercise the following rights with respect to this RFP and all Proposals submitted pursuant to this RFP:

- a. To reject all Proposals and re-issue the RFP at any time prior to execution of the Agreement; to require, in any RFP for similar products and/or services that may be issued subsequent to this RFP, terms and conditions that are substantially different from the terms and conditions set forth in this RFP; or to cancel this RFP with or without issuing another RFP.
- b. To reject any Proposal if, in the WDB's sole discretion, the Proposal is incomplete, the Proposal is not responsive to the requirements of this RFP, the Proposer does not meet the qualification requirements as set forth herein, or it is otherwise in the best interest of the WDB to reject the Proposal.
- c. To supplement, amend, substitute, or otherwise modify this RFP at any time prior to the execution of the Agreement.
- d. To accept or reject any or all of the items in any Proposal and award the Agreement for the whole or only a part of any Proposal if the WDB determines, in its sole discretion, that it is in the WDB's best interest to do so.
- e. To reject the Proposal of any Proposer that, in the WDB's sole judgment, has been delinquent or unfaithful in the performance of any contract with the County, is financially or technically incapable, or is otherwise not a responsible Proposer.
- f. To request that one or more of the Proposers modify their Proposals or provide additional information.

1.8 RFP Timeline

Following is the County's estimated timeline for the RFP process:

Issue RFP	April 4, 2017
Bidder's Conference	April 11, 2017
Cutoff for Submission of Written Questions	April 7, 2017
Deadline for Submission of Proposals	April 27, 2017
Opening of Submitted Proposals (anticipated)	April 28, 2017
WDB's Procurement Review Sub-Committee Review of Proposals (anticipated)	May 2 - 5, 2017
WDB Executive Committee Review/Approval of Proposals (anticipated)	May 15 - 19, 2017
Issue Notice of Contract Award	June 1, 2017

SECTION 2 –Contractor Selection Process/Conditions

2.1 Selection Process

All proposals, once received, opened, and catalogued by the Lackawanna County Controller's Office, or designee, will be forwarded to the WDB Procurement Review Sub-Committee who will review, discuss, evaluate, rate, and make a recommendation for a contract award to the WDB Executive Committee who, acting on behalf of the full WDB membership, will authorize the contract award.

2.2 Right to Negotiate

After the WDB's completion of the Proposal evaluation process, the WDB may elect to initiate negotiations with one or more Proposers for modification of any component of the Agreement, including, without limitation, the scope of services, price or schedule for completion. The option of whether or not to initiate or terminate negotiations rests solely with the WDB, which may be exercised at any time.

2.3 Award of Contract

If the WDB elects to award the Agreement pursuant to this RFP, it intends to award the Agreement to the responsible and responsive Proposer whose Proposal is determined to

provide the best overall value to the local workforce area. The WDB intends to award an initial 15-month (April 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018) Agreement based on current remaining funds for Program Year (PY) 2016 and contingent upon levels of funding received by the WDB for PY 2017. The Contractor will be asked to submit a program narrative and a budget request for a PY 2017 based on available funding

SECTION 3 - Specifications

3.1 Background

The Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board (WDB) has responsibility for long-term strategic planning to meet local workforce development needs. This includes planning, analysis, oversight, evaluation and monitoring, and the development and cultivation of partnerships within the community and/or on a regional basis. The Workforce Development Board also manages Federal and State workforce development funds, financial and programmatic information systems, and performs the procurement, contracting and administrative systems functions required to support the goals of these funds. The PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County is the local Workforce Development Board's principal provider of operational services and the gateway to the workforce development system in Lackawanna County.

3.2 Program Summary

3.2.1 The Lackawanna County WDB, a single County Workforce Development Area located in Northeast Pennsylvania, is seeking a results oriented, customer-focused organization to operate the Employment, Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) in partnership with the One Stop Operator of the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County.

3.2.2 The purpose of EARN is to provide comprehensive activities and services to individuals who are newly applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits as well as individuals who are already receiving TANF benefits. The goal of EARN is to move individuals served toward self-sufficiency.

3.2.3 The EARN operator shall work closely with the Lackawanna County Assistance Office (CAO) and other PA Department of Human Services (DHS) funded agencies located in Lackawanna County.

3.2.4 EARN is regulated by the EARN Program Policy and Procedures Manual, as amended. The most recent version is included as Attachment A.

3.2.5 The services and requirements outlined herein may change significantly during the life of the contracted performance period.

3.3 Program Goals and Objectives

3.3.1 It shall be the intent of all components funded through this Agreement to offer assistance to those in need of employability services and to those most able to benefit from such services. Though such clients may be representative of traditionally categorically labeled groups, negative labeling will not be continued as they become participants and move toward unsubsidized employment. It shall instead be incumbent upon all Vendors and third party Vendors to be instrumental in helping employers to be less concerned with what a client has been and more concerned with what the client

can become, particularly as a result of services or training offered through program resources. It shall additionally be incumbent upon all Vendors to assist participants in developing the skills necessary for self-reliance, particularly in relation to job search. The goal is to move individuals served toward self-sufficiency.

3.4 Scope of Work

3.4.1 General Information

3.4.1.1 Role of the Lackawanna County WDB

3.4.1.1.1 The Lackawanna County WDB is the agent duly authorized to act on all matters, questions and issues relating to or arising out of or as a result of this Agreement.

3.4.1.1.2 In particular, the Lackawanna County WDB is empowered to monitor all activities and expenditures under this Agreement.

3.4.1.1.3 The Lackawanna WDB is also empowered to issue directives and interpretations relating to this Agreement.

3.4.1.2 Target Group

3.4.1.2.1 All EARN participants are referred by the CAO; the One Stop Operator is not permitted to directly recruit clients. These individuals will be TANF and/or General Assistance/Food Stamp, Medical Assistance/Food Stamp, non-cash assistance/Food Stamp eligible. (The Food Stamp program is also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP.)

3.4.1.2.2 During the most recent full year period July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, 349 individuals were enrolled. During the period July 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016, 94 individuals have been enrolled.

3.4.1.2.3 The unemployment rate for Lackawanna County is currently hovering at 5.7%. A majority of clients have minimal work experience. Many lack any vocational specific skills and most lack the soft skills required to be successful at any job. Many also lack the social and family supports that encourage work and make work possible (adequate day care, reliable transportation, supportive family networks).

3.4.1.2.4 A majority of individuals have not completed high school and/or lack adequate literacy skills to find and hold skilled employment.

3.4.1.2.5 All clients are supporting children; many, more than one child. A significant number are pregnant. A significant minority of clients have a criminal history.

3.4.1.3 Program Duration

Initial contract period shall be July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

3.4.1.4 Method of Payment
Cost reimbursement.

3.4.2 General Responsibilities

3.4.2.1 Staffing

3.4.2.1.1 Adequate staff must be hired to ensure the provision of a high level of service to the individuals enrolled in EARN and to ensure the requirements of the EARN Program Policy and Procedures and the requirements and expectations discussed in this RFP are met.

3.4.2.1.2 At least one (1) member of staff working directly with EARN clients must be bilingual in English and Spanish with the ability to translate/interpret written and verbal communication between these two languages.

3.4.2.1.3 All staff must attend any auxiliary training as it relates to their job duties.

3.4.2.2 Hours of Operation

3.4.2.2.1 All EARN activities will follow the operating hours of the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County which are Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

3.4.2.2.2 The PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County currently observes the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Any proposer receiving the award must assure a minimum coverage of EARN staff on any other holidays which may be observed by the proposer.

3.4.2.3 Coordination with PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County

3.4.2.3.1 The successful Proposer will be expected to locate all personnel assigned to this initiative in the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County facility at 135 Franklin Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509 and to insist that all such assigned staff identify themselves in all their public dealings as staff to the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County, not their employing or "parent" organization. On-site direct management will be the responsibility of the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County Site Administrator working in collaboration with the awarded contractor's management staff.

3.4.2.3.2 The successful Proposer(s) will be expected to become a signatory to the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Board (WDB)/One-Stop Partners Agreement, a document executed

between the parties in the Pennsylvania CareerLink® Lackawanna County and the Workforce Development Board. This document describes the general operating policies of the Pennsylvania CareerLink® Lackawanna County and includes the usual “certification and assurances” parameters. In turn, the Proposer then agrees to adhere to the Resource Sharing Agreement Budget (RSAB) which allocates common costs among the partners. The costs include shared staff, building, resource room, and operation expenses. Costs are allocated on a pro-rated share based on staffing levels, except for direct-billed charges. RSAB costs are variable based on projected expenses and number of partners and staff. As such, these costs will not be included as part of the Proposer’s costs. Rent, utilities, cleaning, and copier costs should not be included in the Vendor’s budget submitted to operate the EARN Program.

3.4.2.3.3 Each of the partners in the Pennsylvania CareerLink® Lackawanna County is responsible for its own personnel costs, including wages, fringes, travel, and other expenses.

3.4.2.4 Hours of Participation

The program must be designed to ensure adequate hours are provided each week for clients to meet participation requirements. Federal and State laws require that participants take part in specific activities for mandatory hours per week. As a result, attendance must be strictly monitored. The CAO will notify the client and the EARN operator of required weekly hours on the Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR). The weekly hourly requirement ranges from 20 to 35 hours. After carefully reviewing the Policies and Procedures Manual, the provider must address how these and all other hourly variations will be handled when developing individualized plans for program participants.

3.4.2.5 Service Level

The successful Proposer must be able to accommodate any level of referrals made by the CAO.

3.4.3 Services to Be Performed

3.4.3.1 There is wide latitude in the design of the EARN program. The Lackawanna WDB encourages the submittal of unconventional program models as long as they take into account specifics as already discussed and the following requirements:

3.4.3.1.1 The EARN provider must register with and must data enter information on the Commonwealth Workforce development System (CWDS). The provider must also ensure that each program participant is registered in the PA CareerLink® system (part of CWDS) and that all information is promptly and correctly data entered in accordance with the Policies and Procedures Manual. The provider must also ensure a 7-day average turn-around for data entry is mandatory for DHS and the policies and Procedures Manual.

- 3.4.3.1.2 The EARN operator must acquire CWDS access for all staff and other secure access to Commonwealth systems as required to operate EARN.
- 3.4.3.1.3 The successful Proposer is required to provide all services to all clients regardless of their ability to speak or read English or disability.
- 4.4.3.1.4 Alteration of the submitted EARN program model may be required prior to implementation and ongoing through-out the performance period.

3.4.4 Performance Outcomes

3.4.4.1 The denominator for the following three goals are all program enrollments in a given program year.

- 3.4.4.1.1 Placement rate 50%
- 3.4.4.1.2 Retention rate 30%
- 34.4.4.1.3 Activity Compliance Rate 65%

3.4.4.2 The successful integration of program services and staff into the PA CareerLink[®] Lackawanna County structure is a performance measure applicable to all selected service providers. The successful meeting of these standards shall be determined by the PA CareerLink[®] Lackawanna County WDB.

3.4.5 Administrative Requirements

3.4.5.1 Program Records

3.4.5.1.1 All records pertaining to a subsequent contract must be maintained for a period of seven years beyond the final day of the program year the contract is terminated unless litigations, claims, or audits are begun prior to the expiration of this seven year period, in which case, all records shall be retained until those litigations, claims, or audits relating to those records have been resolved.

3.4.5.2 Program Status Records and Reports

3.4.5.2.1 The provider's Financial Status Report (FSR) must be submitted to the WDB by the 5th business day on the month following the month being reported.

3.4.5.3 Other Requirements

- 3.4.5.3.1 The service provider must comply with all Federal audit requirements, including Subpart F., Sections 200.500-521 of 2 CFR 200, the OMB Uniform Code.
- 3.4.5.3.2 The program, including all associated records, staff, participants, and documentation of performance must be available for monitoring by Lackawanna County WDB staff/Independent Monitor and representatives of Federal and Commonwealth funding sources.
- 3.4.5.3.3 The service provider must have the ability/be able to produce ad-hoc program reports as directed by the Lackawanna County WDB.

3.5 Qualifications/Experience

3.5.1 Proposing Firm

3.5.1.1 The proposing firm shall at minimum:

- 3.5.1.1.1 have demonstrated past performance related to the ability to meet schedules and deadlines on programs of similar scope and size; and
- 3.5.1.1.2 have demonstrated past exceptional performance related to quality developing and implementing programming of design on programs of similar scope and size.

3.5.1.2 It is important to note that “proposing firm” refers to the company that would enter into the Agreement with the WDB/County. To be considered, the proposing firm must meet or exceed the benchmarks set forth above on its own merit. Also important to note is that the WDB/County is not interested in a joint venture program, but prefers to enter into the Agreement with a single entity.

3.5.1.3 Each proposing firm shall certify that it is not currently under suspension or debarment by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or federal government. If the proposing firm cannot so certify, then it shall submit a written explanation of why such certification cannot be made.

3.5.2 Program Staff/Team

3.5.2.1 An assigned Program Manager shall, at minimum:

- 3.5.2.1.1 have a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Services or related field and a minimum of two years experience in administering a program to individuals who are newly applying for TANF benefits as well as individuals who are already receiving TANF benefits collectively or other individuals facing challenges due to low income and lack of employable skills.
- 3.5.2.1.2 have demonstrated skills, technical knowledge, and administrative

capability to serve all the requirements of the proposed program specifications on past projects-of similar scope and size; and

3.5.2.1.3 possess certifications, licenses and proficiency in the application of requirements and guidelines as applicable.

3.5.2.2 Other Program Staff/Team members shall, at minimum:

3.5.2.2.1 have two (2) years of experience working with individuals who are newly applying for TANF benefits as well as individuals who are already receiving TANF benefits or other individuals facing challenges due to low income and lack of employable skills; and

3.5.2.2.2 have demonstrated skills and technical knowledge to serve all the requirements of the proposed program specifications.

3.5.3 Organizational Structure

3.5.3.1 The provider is required to submit an organizational chart detailing the composition of all staff who will be associated with the project, noting full-time or part-time status;

3.5.3.2 The provider will be required to submit job descriptions of all staff to be associated with the project;

3.5.3.3 If you currently have staff that you will use to administer this project, please attach a resume for each and indicate to which position that staff will be assigned;

3.5.3.4 In the event that an organization other than the current provider is awarded the contract, swift and immediate transition activities will be necessary. The Lackawanna County WDB recommends that any organization awarded funds through this RFP gives first consideration of employment to current employees who may be displaced as a result of this procurement.

3.5.3.5 In the event that the current organization is awarded the contract, all activities must be transitioned to the PA CareerLink® Lackawanna County by April 1, 2017.

3.5.3.6 It is expected by the Board that the parties involved will work together to ensure that programs and services to the customers are not impacted during this transition period.

3.6 Program Timeline

Any all services are expected to commence or be transitioned by July 1, 2017.

SECTION 4 - Proposal Format and Content

4.1 Submission of Proposal

Proposals, including all budget information, must be submitted in a sealed envelope with one (1) original and seven (7) copies printed on 8½" x 11" paper, and one (1) electronic copy (via flash drive) included to: Mr. Andrew Wallace, Lackawanna County Chief of Staff, 200 Adams Avenue 6th Floor, Scranton, PA 18503. The original Proposal shall be marked "original" and each copy of the Proposal must be a complete copy of the original including all attachments and appendixes.

4.2 Proposal Format

The County discourages overly lengthy and costly proposals; however, proposers should follow the format set out herein and provide all of the information requested. For a Proposal to be considered, proposers must follow the instructions outlined in this RFP. Proposals should not be encased in any type of binder or contain section dividers.

4.3 Transmittal Letter

Proposals shall include a brief letter which provides the company's name; address of the main office and any branch offices; telephone and fax number for each office; name, title, telephone number, fax number, and email address of the company's contact person for this Program; a statement that the Proposal is in response to this RFP; and the signature, typed name, and title of an individual who has *actual authority** to commit the Proposer to the Proposal.

**Proposals by individuals must be signed personally, with name typed below signature, and witnessed. A complete address and trade name must be provided. Proposals by corporations must include the typed name of the corporation, the State of incorporation, and the principal officer of the corporation. The Proposal must be signed by the President or Vice-President (or by an officer or agent duly authorized to bind the corporation to a contract.*

4.4 Understanding of the Services

Proposers must provide a comprehensive narrative statement that illustrates their understanding of the requirements of the Services, and illustrates how their methodology will serve to accomplish the work.

4.5 Qualification Statement

4.5.1 Each Proposal shall include, at minimum, the following information about the company as so referenced by corresponding number:

4.5.1.1 The number of years the company has been in business.

4.5.1.2 The number of years the company has acted as program operator of a jobs first program for TANF recipients or other individuals facing challenges due to low income and lack of employable skills.

4.5.1.3 The type of organization of the company. (i.e. Corporation, Partnership, Sole Proprietorship).

4.5.1.4 The names and titles of the company's principles or list of Organization's Board of Directors.

4.5.1.5 The company's most recent annual report or the company's most recent income statement, balance sheet, and statement of cash flow accompanied by an auditor's report attesting to the accuracy of these financial statements.

4.5.1.6 Identify if Company holds any current federal certifications for the following: Minority Owned Business (MBE), Women Owned Business (WBE), Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB), Disadvantage Business Enterprises (DBE), 8a Designation, HUB Zone Business Enterprises (HUB) or Disabled Veteran Business (DVBE).

4.5.1.6.3 Any and all certifications required or sought after for the services being provided.

4.5.2 The following questions should be answered thoroughly as part of the Proposal:

4.5.2.1 What is the company's main business focus?

4.5.2.2 What are the strengths of the company and how will the WDB benefit from those strengths?

4.5.3 Each Proposal shall address the company's qualifications for the development and completion of the Services based on the following:

4.5.3.1 List and describe any experience the company's has/had with federal, state or local government work experience programs for TANF-eligible or other government work experience programs. For each listed program include: name and location of program; reference contact name; telephone number; email address; estimated total program cost and actual total program cost; planned program completion date and actual program completion date; and summary description of the program. Additionally, include one monitoring report that was supplied to each agency/government.

4.5.3.2 Describe the company's capacity to execute the Services within the proposed timeline. Describe the company's willingness and ability to commit personnel to meet the scope and schedule of the services.

4.5.3.3 Describe the overall design, service strategy, and customer flow of your project. The provider must design the EARN program by the strategies outlined and is responsible for attainment of each of the performance measures outlined in the EARN Policies and Procedures Manual which provides information on program requirements.

4.5.3.4 Advise how performance goals, as defined in the EARN Policies and Procedures Manual (see chart below), will be achieved.

Performance Goal	Definition	Goal	% of Payment
Placement	Clients must obtain unsubsidized employment (AC 33) working in a minimum of 80 hours in a 4-consecutive week period. The 4-week	50% of clients	45%

	period must begin within the 180 days of the enrollment date.	enrolled	
Retention	After a client meets the placement goal, the client must retain unsubsidized employment (AC 33) of at least 80 hours in any given calendar month for up to 6 months following the placement month. A client may meet the retention goal up to 6 times in the 6 months immediately following the placement month. A client may not have hours counted in the same calendar month for both placement and retention.	30% of clients enrolled	45%
Activity Compliance (ACR)	Clients enrolled must be in a core activity that meets their work participation requirement as validated using the ACR report.	65% of clients enrolled	10%

4.5.3.5 Does your organization/company have experience with being evaluated on performance goals and measures? If yes, provide documentation of goal achievement and the steps taken to achieve those goals.

4.5.3.6 Provide the methodology on how your firm will collect data related to performance goals and measures.

4.6 Conflict of Interest

4.6.1 Each Proposal shall include a conflict of interest statement indicating whether or not any principals in the company, their spouse, or their child is employed by the County of Lackawanna, and whether or not the company or any individuals providing Services has a possible conflict of interest, and, if so, the nature of that conflict.

4.6.2 To preserve the integrity of County employees and elected officials and to maintain public confidence in the RFP process, the County prohibits the solicitation or acceptance of anything of value by a County employee or elected official from any person seeking to initiate or maintain a business relationship with County departments, boards, commissions, and agencies.

4.6.3 Proposers shall not pay any salaries, commissions, fees, or make any payments or rebates to any employee, elected official of the County or their designees, or other government officials. Nor shall any Proposer favor any employee, elected official of the County or their designees, or other government officials with gifts or entertainment of significant cost or value, or with services or goods sold at less than full market value.

4.6.4 Proposer is discouraged from utilizing any governmental elected official from endorsing this proposal.

4.6.5 The WDB/County reserves the right to disqualify a Proposer or cancel an award of the Agreement if any interest disclosed from any source could either give the appearance of a conflict or cause speculation as to the objectivity of the program to be performed by the Proposer. The WDB/County’s determination regarding any question of conflict of interest shall be final.

4.7 Insurance

Each Proposer must provide with its Proposal a certificate of insurance evidencing, at minimum, its current insurance coverage types and levels.

4.8 Program Schedule

Proposals shall include the Proposer's planned program schedule including expected completion time periods for each task defined in Section 4 – Specifications.

4.9 Budget

4.9.1 Complete Budget Form, for period of 7-1-17 – 6-30-18.

4.9.2 Provide a detailed narrative of all budget costs.

4.9.3 Provide a suggested payment schedule.

The Agreement resulting from the award of this RFP will be for a not to exceed amount. The County will make payment within 45 days of receipt of a properly prepared invoice for services satisfactorily performed. The successful Proposer must submit an invoice monthly, in the timeframe described in Section 5, Clause 5.4.5.2. after the completion of services set forth in the scope of services. The amount invoiced must coincide with the amount proposed for each respective service.

SECTION 5 – Selection and Evaluation Criteria

5.1 Proposal Review Process

The selection of all workforce development service providers will be made on a competitive basis. All submissions under this RFP must be responsive to all requirements in this RFP and received on time in order to be considered by the Lackawanna County WDB. The organization considered must possess the highest standards of integrity and business ethics. Awards will be made based on best overall value in regards to delivery of services within the Lackawanna County Workforce Development Area.

5.1.1 Rules that apply to the selection and award of contracts or services procured under this RFP include:

5.1.1.1 All proposals considered must be received on time and be responsive to the RFP.

5.1.1.2 Positive efforts shall be made to utilize small, minority and female owned or operated organizations in the provision of services. These efforts shall allow those sources maximum feasible opportunity to compete for contracts.

5.1.1.3 Awards of Contracts shall be made only to "Responsible Contractors" who have demonstrated competence and qualifications, including: a satisfactory record of past performance in conducting similar activities, contractor integrity and business ethics, fiscal accountability, financial and technical resources, and ability to meet the requirements of this RFP and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services EARN goals and guidelines.

5.2 Proposal Evaluation Process

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

5.2.1 All submitted proposals will be opened by the Lackawanna County Chief of Staff, or assigned designee(s). The initial screening of proposals will be performed by the Lackawanna County Chief of Staff, or designated staff, to ensure that submissions are responsive to this solicitation, conform to its requirements and are acceptable for full review. A standard initial screening instrument will be utilized. Any proposal not meeting all of the specified minimum standards will be considered non-responsive and will be given no further consideration. Proposals meeting all of the specified minimum standards will be forwarded to the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Director for disbursement to the WDB Procurement Review Sub-Committee for a full review and evaluation.

5.2.1.1 A proposal must meet the following minimum standards to be considered for funding. The proposal must:

5.2.1.1.1 Have been received by 12:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 27, 2017;

5.2.1.1.2 Include one (1) original and seven (7) additional complete copies and one (1) flash drive;

5.2.1.1.3 Be complete with all required signature forms (one original in blue ink and seven copies) by the proposer's authorized signatory authority;

5.2.1.1.4 Meet the proposal requirements contained in Sections 4 & 5;

5.2.1.1.5 Includes a Budget Form and line-item narrative description;

5.2.1.1.6 Contain most recent Audited Financial Statement;

5.2.1.1.7 Contain evidence of real or apparent conflict of interest, if applicable.

5.2.2 The Lackawanna County Procurement Review Sub-Committee will conduct a full review of all proposals meeting the minimum standards as forwarded by Lackawanna County WDB staff. The Committee will conduct both quantitative and qualitative reviews of each proposal and forward all results to Lackawanna County WDB staff for compilation.

The top three proposers based upon this quantitative review **may** be invited for oral presentations to the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee should questions arise during the review process.

The qualitative review will include detailed, annotated strengths and weaknesses. These qualitative review results and proposals will be distributed to the Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee members for review and final award decision.

Each Lackawanna County WDB Procurement Review Sub-Committee member will use a ranking system to rate each proposal.

5.2.3 The Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Lackawanna County WDB, will review Lackawanna County WDB Procurement Review Sub-Committee ranking review results, **may** hear oral presentations and address related questions to proposers, if necessary. Lackawanna County WDB staff will coordinate the Executive Committee's activities and provide input and technical assistance. The Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee will review/evaluate the results of the Procurement Review Sub-Committee rankings; request further clarification, if warranted; and provide expertise in the selection of contractors. The Lackawanna County WDB Executive Committee will recommend contract award to the proposal receiving the highest number of total points based upon the aggregate scores. In case of a tie in total points, the highest scorer, based upon the Lackawanna County WDB Procurement Review Sub-Committee results, will be the proposal chosen.

5.3 Pricing and Cost Analysis

6.3.1 The justification of qualitative and quantitative services within the following funding level:

a. July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 Approximately \$300,000

5.3.2 The Proposer's plan for utilization of performance-based earned funds) please describe in detail).

5.3.2.1 In accordance with the EARN Program Policies and Procedures Manual, assurance that any/all performance-based earned funds awarded to the EARN provider must be reinvested into the EARN program.

5.3.3 The Proposer's process for the leveraging of funds, if applicable.

5.3.4 The Proposer's administrative ability to contract with Lackawanna County.

5.4.1.1 Ability (Resource Commitment) – The Proposer's ability to perform the required service expeditiously. The Proposer must have the resources to be capable of meeting a program completion schedule.

5.4.1.2 Competence (Qualifications of Personnel) – The Proposer's competence in performing the required service as indicated by the training, education and experience of the personnel assigned or to be assigned to the program team. The Proposer must have in their possession all appropriate and required certifications, permits, and licenses.

5.4.1.3 Past Performance – The Proposer's past performance on similar programs. If the County cannot verify references based on the information provided in the Proposal, the scoring for this criteria factor may be affected.

5.4.1.4 Quality and Feasibility (Technical & Organizational Approach) – The quality and feasibility of the Technical Proposal and the Proposer's understanding of the program's requirements and the overall goals and objectives of the program.

5.4.1.5 Proposal Content/Format – The Proposal's compliance with the content and format requirements of this RFP.

BUDGET SHEET

Complete the grant information below and the following budget pages. All budget sheets, including the supporting budget sheets, should be submitted with your proposal. An in-depth line-item narrative must accompany the budget form with an explanation of all costs by category.

Project Line Item Budget: Period July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 \$300,000

PROJECT LINE ITEM BUDGET:

Instructions: Indicate planned project expenditures for the period listed above.

Expense Item	Project Management Costs	Program Costs	Combined Total Expenditures
Staff Salaries/Wages ¹			
Staff Fringe Benefits % of Salaries			
Total Salaries & Benefits			
Staff Travel			
Communications			
PA CareerLink® RSAB FTEs/PTEs			
Office Supplies			
Consumable Program Supplies			
Other ²			
Other ³			
Total Expenditures			
Percentage of Total Cost	%	%	100%

List any other expenses for the applicable program year period.

Direct Client Services Cost List

Projected In-House Skills Training Expenses: \$ _____

Projected Paid Work Experience Wages \$ _____

Projected Paid Work Experience Fringe Benefits \$ _____

Projected Subsidized Employment Wages \$ _____

Projected Individual Training Account Expenses \$ _____

Projected Supportive Services/Incentives Expenses \$ _____

¹ Attach a list of staff positions and the number of Full-Time Equivalent staff assigned to and the respective salary budgeted for each position assigned to the project. Attach job descriptions for the budgeted positions.

² Attach a description of the types of expenses included in this item. Include the planned cost for each.

³ Total of all direct client services costs as detailed below.

Note: Add to the above list any other type of expense(s) and the planned cost.

Transfer this overall value to the Project Line Item Budget under the category Other – Footnote #3.

EARN

EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION NETWORK



PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
PROGRAM YEAR 2016 - 2017**

APPENDIX A OF THE STATEMENT OF WORK

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Program Overview

Employee Advancement and Retention Network (EARN) is designed to assist clients in their transition from welfare to the workforce. The focus of all programming is to decrease dependency on public assistance and move towards self-sufficiency. While the primary focus of the program is to move clients into the workforce, the program is still to provide other activities that will aid in the pursuit of that goal.

Eligibility Criteria

County assistance office (CAO) staff will determine eligibility for the EARN program and refer clients to EARN based on CAO policy and procedures.

Individuals eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), excluded from Diversion, may be referred to the EARN contractor. The hours of participation are determined by the household composition for TANF.

SECTION 2 – REFERRALS

Program Referrals

In order to increase the likelihood of initial attendance in the program, the EARN program is encouraged to make contact with the client prior to the appointment date. Programs with high referral rejection rates may be required to develop a plan for referral outreach.

Explaining the program, ensuring that the individual knows where and when to report, and assisting in the removal of potential childcare and transportation problems may lead to a higher referral to enrollment rate, and continued participation.

The provider should make every reasonable accommodation as business needs allow, accepting referrals every day of the business week.

EARN programs may set their orientation start time; however, a client must be given every opportunity to report to the program and he or she should not be immediately referral rejected if late for the program's orientation or scheduled appointment date. It is recommended that the program work with the CAO before referral rejecting a client.

In the case of employed individuals referred to EARN for additional participation hours, case managers should make reasonable accommodations to meet with the client at a time that does not interfere with his or her scheduled work hours.

The EARN provider must act on the CAO referral within 14 days of the referral date.

NOTE: The referral date is not included in this count.

Project Referral Rejection Codes

If the client does not show for orientation or refuses to cooperate at the orientation, the EARN service provider will referral reject the client with the appropriate code listed below.

Referral rejection codes will be used to track the reason a client's referral to EARN is rejected prior to enrollment. The EARN service provider must data enter these codes on Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS).

The following project referral rejection codes may be used with EARN:

- Code 1 – Failed to report
- Code 2 – Refused to cooperate
- Code 4 – No Action Taken (System Generated)

Code 5 – Other

Code T – Referred in error

NOTE: All Code 5 rejections must be duly narrated in CWDS and are subject to DHS review.

EARN providers should use Direct Service Team (DST) meetings as an opportunity to discuss referral rejections; specifically referrals rejected with Code 1 – Failed to report.

SECTION 3 - ENROLLMENTS

Initial Program Enrollment

The EARN service provider must enroll the client the date he or she reports to the program. Data entry of the client's enrollment in CWDS must be completed within three working days of the date of enrollment.

NOTE: The date the client reports to the EARN center is not included in this count.

To enroll a client in an EARN service provider (Project Code D or NC for Philadelphia), the EARN service provider will enter a start date in CWDS. After enrolling the client in the program, the EARN service provider must open at least one activity code to track participation. Under no circumstances is a client to have an open project with no open activity code.

At the time a client is enrolled, the EARN service provider will conduct a case review to become familiar with the client's background and situation. If available, the EARN service provider will review the information below:

- Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR) with particular attention to:
 - ✓ Education level.
 - ✓ Age of youngest child.
 - ✓ Identified barriers.
- Child care and transportation arrangements.
- Medical information, including physician, clinic, and hospital records (if applicable).
- Work history.
- Family and social history focusing on household composition.
- Information regarding the client's current and past participation in Employment & Training (E&T) programs.
- Educational activities and the outcome of those experiences.
- Information regarding services the participant is receiving from other agencies/providers.
- Case narratives (if applicable).
- Any other pertinent information.

During the client's initial enrollment period, the EARN service provider will review the following:

- EARN policies and client requirements, including hourly requirements.
- EARN service provider's responsibilities, including their role in developing and monitoring the client's active service plan and progress through the program.
- Authorization for Release of Information.

Service Plans

A service plan will be developed by the EARN service provider and the client to address the needs of the client and his or her household. It will contain all recommended services, activities and supports, and will address all barriers and any concerns; this should include all barriers as listed on the AMR. The plan must be updated as the client's activities change.

At a minimum an acceptable service plan must:

- ✓ Indicate specific goals.
- ✓ Identify barriers.
- ✓ Consist of an action plan that reflects these goals and barriers.
- ✓ Show the client's progress through the program (including specific activities, activity begin/end dates, and expected hours).
- ✓ Mirror the CWDS Service Record screens.

In order to remain enrolled in EARN, the client must agree to the terms of the Service Plan and sign and date the document at the time of completion, as well as at the time of any updates.

NOTE: Noncompliance with the Service Plan should be documented in the case notes and discussed at the local DST meeting.

NOTE: The EARN service provider is to create Service Plans in CWDS using the Create Plan screen.

Determining Hours of Participation

The number of core and non-core hours a client is required to participate in will be determined by the CAO and recorded on the client's AMR. The EARN service provider must ensure the client participates for at least the minimum number of hours as determined by the CAO caseworker and recorded on the AMR.

Participation Hours

Core Hours: Required for all individuals who are mandatory to participate in Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training.

Non-Core Hours: Available if additional hours are needed to meet the minimum work requirement after the required core activity hours are met or when all opportunities to participate in a countable core activity have been exhausted or are not available.

An individual can participate in more than one core activity to meet the minimum work requirement. Once the required number of core hours is met, an individual may choose to participate in any core or non-core activity.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION	MINIMUM HOURS per WEEK
SINGLE PARENT	
child under age 6	20 hours in a core activity.
all children over age 6	30 hours with at least 20 in a core activity.
pregnant/no other children	30 hours with at least 20 in a core activity.
under age 22, head of household	Meeting participation requirement if satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or GED program. Enter 20 hours.
TWO PARENT	
both parents under age 22, heads of household	Meeting participation requirement if satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or GED program. Enter 20 hours for each parent.
not receiving federally-funded child care	35 hours combined. One parent must participate in at least 30 hours in a core activity.
receiving federally-funded child care	55 hours combined, at least 50 hours in a core activity. One parent must participate in at least 30 hours in a core activity. Either parent may participate for any remaining activity hours in non-core activities.
one parent DS, NS or DF not receiving federally-funded child care	One parent must participate in 35 hours, at least 30 hours in a core activity.
one parent DS, NS or DF receiving federally-funded child care	One parent must participate in 55 hours, at least 50 hours in a core activity.
one parent disabled – J parent	20 or 30 hours depending on the family composition. One parent must participate for 20 hours in core activities and child care does not affect the number of participation hours.
one parent ETP code 53	30 hours. One parent must participate for 20 hours in core activities and child care does not affect the number of participation hours.

Activity Compliance Rate (ACR)

The CWDS Activity Compliance Report displays the degree to which clients enrolled with a specified provider are engaged and participating in activities that contribute toward achievement of the statewide work participation rate (WPR).

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) requires that each state meet a WPR of 50 percent. The WPR is measured by how many of the TANF cases required to meet participation requirements per federal regulations are meeting the participation requirements. States face significant financial penalties for failure to comply with the required WPR. The EARN vendors, who serve a large number of Pennsylvania’s mandatory participant population must comply with work participation and activity compliance requirements in order to ensure the state meets its goal.

The CWDS logic is capable of sorting the client data and comparing it to the parameters necessary for achievement of the ACR. Service providers with a low ACR will be provided technical assistance by DHS in an effort to improve their ACR.

When a client's TANF closes due to income, the provider should be aware that the client remains part of the WPR Calculation through the duration of his/her receipt of transitional cash assistance (TCA) from the CAO. The client is expected to meet the same amount of hours that they were required to meet under the TANF rules until the end of the TCA period. Upon the end of the TCA period, the client is eligible to remain enrolled, and may be included in the retention calculation.

TANF Monthly Sample: The monthly sample is the selection of actual cases that are submitted to the federal government as a part of the federal TANF Data Report. This report is used to determine the commonwealth's actual WPR.

There is no way to know for certain what cases will be selected as part of the monthly sample. For this reason, it is extremely important to ensure that each participant achieves the required core and non-core hourly blend for each week during each month.

SECTION 4 – Employment and Training (E&T) ACTIVITIES

E&T Activity Codes and Descriptions

E&T Activity Codes will be used to track the activities the EARN client is engaged in at any specific time. The EARN service provider will data enter the activity codes in CWDS. Multiple activity codes can be entered at the same time; however, the activity codes in CWDS and the activities listed on the Service Plan must agree.

The EARN service provider must enter participation hours after the client actually attends the service or activity and documentation is provided.

The activity codes that may be utilized in the EARN program are listed in the table on the following pages, along with descriptions of each code. Please note the designation of core or non-core for each activity, as well as durational time limits or important notes included as applicable.

E&T ACTIVITY CODES AND DESCRIPTION

Activity	Code	Description	Core/ Non- Core	Durational Limits	Comments
Providing child care for a community service participant	6	The hours a TANF client spends caring for a child of another TANF client who is participating in a community service.	Core	None	
General Equivalency Diploma(GED)/ High School - Preparation for GED (ONLY IF CLIENT IS UNDER AGE 22)	18	Educational activity offered by an accredited high school or GED provider.	Core	None	When the participant maintains satisfactory progress as determined by the educational provider, the client will receive credit for compliance with 20 hours per week of activity.
Community Service	20	Community Service must be unpaid work for the federal, state or local government, or a non-profit organization to increase skills and attain an employment history including AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer Community Service.	Core	None	<p>CAOs determine number of hours per week allowed in this activity based on the Fair Labor Standards Act Law (FLSA). CAO caseworker is to note the number of hours on the client's AMR.</p> <p>Cannot exceed the maximum number of allowable hours calculated under the FLSA as determined by the CAO.</p> <p>If maximum hours allowable are < 20 hours per week, hours may be deemed up to 20 if the individual participates in community service for the maximum number of allowable hours. Community service hours may only be deemed to the CORE requirement.</p> <p>Community service is a beneficial activity available for clients who have a negligible work history or who live in communities where there is minimal employment.</p>

E&T ACTIVITY CODES AND DESCRIPTION

Activity	Code	Description	Core/ Non- Core	Durational Limits	Comments
On-the-Job-Training	22	On-the-job training provides public or private sector employers with a wage subsidy for a negotiated period of time. On-the-job training programs require the employer to provide specialized training to the participant. In order to use subsidized employment as an activity, programs must enter into a written agreement with the employer.	Core	None	
Subsidized Employment	23	Subsidized employment provides public or private sector employers with a wage subsidy for a negotiated period of time. Subsidized employment programs do not require the employer to provide special training to the participant other than that which any other employees in the same position would receive. In order to use subsidized employment as an activity, programs must enter into a written agreement with the employer.	Core	None	

E&T ACTIVITY CODES AND DESCRIPTION

Activity	Code	Description	Core/ Non- Core	Durational Limits	Comments
Vocational Education	24	Vocational education provides training in specific occupational skills needed in the current job market.	Core	<p>Skill/vocational training is a time-limited TANF activity. Clients are limited to 12 months in a lifetime. DHS has chosen to allow clients to exceed the federal 12-month lifetime limit on this activity in the case where a client is enrolled in the activity to obtain a credential/certification under the standards for the PY 16/17 credentialing performance payment. In such circumstances, these activity hours may be counted towards a client's core requirement.</p> <p>Clients receiving extended TANF benefits (ETANF) cannot be placed in this activity; however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ETANF clients already in post-secondary education when they become ETANF may continue in that activity until the end of the current term or semester. -ETANF clients may be enrolled in credentialing/certification program that meets the standards for the PY 16/17 credentialing performance payment, but may not be enrolled in a vocational education program that is not intended for credentialing. 	<p>DHS stresses that the use of vocational education should be matched to specific career field and lead to a certificate or diploma that is accepted by area employers.</p> <p>The school's study policy must be obtained and retained. This document identifies the number of study time hours expected by the school. A student can receive one hour of unsupervised study time for one hour of class time with no verification needed. Study time that is documented and monitored by the E&T contractor or an accredited education provider can also be counted. Total study time hours, unsupervised and supervised, may not exceed the number of study time hours expected for the course as determined by the school's study policy.</p> <p>Additional activities may be embedded within the curriculum and include ABE, ESL and GED.</p>
Paid Work Experience (PWE)	26	PWE is an opportunity for clients to enhance workplace skills and employability. PWE is subsidized employment.	Core	Current DHS regulations allow this activity for a maximum of six months in an individual's lifetime with the following exceptions. PWE may be extended if an individual has a disability covered under the provisions of the ADA or if an individual has to withdraw from PWE for good cause such as injury.	

E&T ACTIVITY CODES AND DESCRIPTION

Activity	Code	Description	Core/ Non- Core	Durational Limits	Comments
Unsubsidized Employment	33	Unsubsidized employment is full or part-time employment, including self-employment, in which neither the employer nor employee receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds. The program must document the job start by obtaining a copy of a pay stub or a letter from the employer on company stationery.	Core		
Job Search/Prep Training and ongoing job search	42	Job search is an activity that consists of seeking full-time or part-time employment that is combined with organized training that prepares an individual for the workplace.	Core	<p>TANF clients cannot participate in job search for more than four consecutive weeks. After a four-week consecutive period of job search, the client must be enrolled in another activity for at least one week. For this purpose, one hour of job search in a week counts as a week of job search.</p> <p>Clients may also not participate in job search for more than 12 weeks in a rolling 12-month period. The 12-week limit can be calculated using actual hours engaged in the activity rather than in weeks. See comments column.</p>	<p>For the 12-week limit, one week of job search is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -20 hours for a single parent with a child less than six years of age (for a total of 240 hours for the 12-week limit in a 12-month time frame -30 hours for other individuals who have a 30 hour per week requirement (for a total of 360 hours for the 12-week limit in a 12-month time frame.

E&T ACTIVITY CODES AND DESCRIPTION					
Activity	Code	Description	Core/ Non- Core	Durational Limits	Comments
Vocation-Specific Work Experience (VWE)	51	VWE is DHS'-funded work experience, which is directly related to an individual's field of study during their enrollment in vocational or post-secondary education.	Core	None	<p>As in many adult education models, it is important that classroom theories are applied in a "real life" environment to ensure that students can more readily connect theory and practice, which results in helping them become more employable.</p> <p>VWE is intended to offer the individual the opportunity to apply their current course of vocational or post-secondary education in a vocation-specific work setting.</p>
English as a Second Language (ESL)	11	ESL is part of a training plan specifically designed to improve the individual's English language proficiency needed to compete successfully in the current job market. The ESL curriculum focuses on vocabulary and reading assignments which relate to the participant's current plan for obtaining employment.	Non- Core	None	
Adult Basic Education/Literacy (ABE)	12	ABE is designed to increase literacy and computational levels consistent with employment goals.	Non- Core	None	The educational activity must be embedded with other skills training activities that have been determined necessary in order to meet the goals set on the participant's Service Plan.

E&T ACTIVITY CODES AND DESCRIPTION

Activity	Code	Description	Core/ Non- Core	Durational Limits	Comments
GED/ High School - Preparation for GED (FOR CLIENTS AGE 22 OR OLDER)	18	Educational activity offered by an accredited high school or GED provider.	Non- Core	None	As a non-core activity, only actual attendance hours may be counted towards participation.
Non-Core Vocational education for a client without a high school diploma or GED	34	Vocational Education provides training in specific occupational skills needed in the current job market.	Non- Core	None	This code is for clients without a high school diploma or GED.
Non-Core Vocational education for a client with a high school diploma or GED	35	This code is for clients with a high school diploma or GED. Vocational Education provides training in specific occupational skills needed in the current job market.	Non- Core	None	
Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment	38	Job skills training directly related to employment is formal training provided by a contracted E&T vendor, that is specifically designed to improve an individual's skills on the job, and may include continuing education or job skills courses.	Non- Core	None	

Activity Closing Codes

The EARN service provider is required to data enter an appropriate activity closing code when ending the client's participation in activity.

The code used to terminate will indicate the completion of the activity and must be entered before terminating the project on CWDS.

NOTE: All activities and sub-projects must be end-dated before a termination code can be data entered on the Edit Participant Case Details Screen to end the client's project enrollment.

The following activity closing codes may be used with EARN activities:

Activity Closing Code 1 – Not Complete

Activity Closing Code 9 – Complete

Activity Closing Code C – Credentialing Complete (Activity 24 only)

The CWDS service record should accurately represent a client's scheduled activities. If a client no longer has scheduled days of participation in an activity, the activity should be closed. The activity can be reopened when additional hours of participation are needed to meet ACR requirements.

SECTION 5 – PROGRAM ATTENDANCE & RECORD KEEPING

Attendance Documentation

Employment

Employment hours must be verified through paystubs, documentation from the employer, DHS approved Employment Verification Form (EVF) or the Work Number (or similar service). Documentation must include at least monthly income verification to determine if the client met the performance standards for placement and retention. Hours entered must be verified and cannot be projected based on a single pay stub.

All Other Activities

Participation hours in all other activities (unpaid work activities) must be verified by the EARN weekly attendance forms, vocational education/skills training weekly attendance forms, community service weekly attendance forms (PA 590), and/or any other weekly attendance form deemed acceptable by DHS.

To ensure attendance documentation meets minimum requirements and to avoid the need for potential clarification during the monitoring and/or TANF sampling processes, it is recommended that the EARN provider use the DHS approved EARN weekly attendance form to verify participation hours.

When a client participates in community service or vocational education at a location other than the EARN center, the EARN service provider is required to collect documentation from the third party documenting the activities in which the client participated. In order to ensure continued participation in off-site locations, it is recommended that documentation be collected weekly. Clients participating in activities at the EARN center must complete and sign the EARN attendance sheet, along with the case manager.

Community Service: Specific forms need to be completed by the client and community service site when a client is participating in community service (Attachments B, C and D). The maximum number of allowable hours that a client may participate in community service should be documented by the CAO. Please reference comments under Community Service under Section 3, Activity Codes.

Vocational Education: Hours of participation may be verified using one of the following methods:

1. An instructor, or other college personnel such as, but not limited to, a staff member in the registrar's office, financial aid office, or academic department, may verify hours of

- participation on a weekly basis, at the minimum. Signatures may be physical or electronic.
2. The contractor case manager may sign the attendance form to verify hours of participation only when there is ongoing contact with the student or when adequate evidence is provided that the student is making satisfactory progress.
 - a. Ongoing contact is defined as weekly contact with the student.
 - b. Adequate Evidence of satisfactory progress could include:
 - i. Electronic communication with the instructor or college personnel to verify that the student is attending class or completing required assignments on a weekly basis.
 - ii. Weekly progress reports from the college.
 - iii. Documentation of expected assignments and confirmation of completion and submission of assignments on a weekly basis.
 - c. Satisfactory progress is defined as meeting the college's expectations to remain enrolled in the college the following semester.
 3. Electronic time sheets, time clocks, swipe cards, or telephone time and attendance sheets to verify the hours of participation listed on the attendance sheets.

The school's study policy must be obtained and retained. This document identifies the number of study time hours expected by the school. A student can receive one hour of unsupervised study time for one hour of class time with no verification needed. Study time that is documented and monitored by the E&T contractor or an accredited education provider can also be counted. Total study time hours, unsupervised and supervised, may not exceed the number of study time hours expected for the course as determined by the school's study policy.

Vocational Education provided by the EARN Vendor:

Vocational educational training is defined as "organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training other than an advanced degree."

All Vocational education activities conducted in-house, whether designed to provide a credential/certification or not, must be matched to career fields within the Workforce Investment Area.

Non-credentialing: Vocational education activities conducted in-house without the intent of credentialing must be accompanied by a curriculum that has been submitted to and accepted by the Bureau of Policy (BOP) prior to implementation. If changes are made to the approved curriculum, the updated curriculum must be re-submitted for endorsement to BOP 10 days prior to implementation. Curriculums should be submitted to the resource account, RA-BOPEARNPOLICY@PA.GOV.

Credentialing: Vocational education activities which will lead to receipt of a diploma or certification that will provide the client with a valuable and marketable skill directly related to employment must be submitted, approved and accepted by the BOP prior to implementation. Any certification program package submitted must include the following components:

1. Certification area: A statement including what marketable, valuable skill will be earned by the participant when the program is completed.
2. Program's value: Justification of why the certification is valuable in your area industry, and how developing the skill will improve the participant's chance of gaining employment in a high priority occupation based on the workforce area and moving towards self-sufficiency.
3. Curriculum: The subjects that the certification program will cover.
Example: If the program is going to lead to a certificate in customer service, you would list all the subjects you will cover such as; Proper Dress Codes, Professional Writing Skills, How to Speak to Customers, etc.
4. Syllabus: A day-to-day outline of the progression of the program, including time frames. This should provide detail on how the curriculum will be taught. It also needs to include the goal of each lesson.
5. Assessment: The methods to be used in measuring student progress.
6. Statement of study time expectations (if applicable): Study time will not be granted automatically for these programs. If a client is expected to study outside of class time, then a statement of what the study time expectations are must accompany the program description. If a statement of study time is not submitted, no study time will be allowed when a case is pulled for validation.

If changes are made to the approved certification program, an updated package must be re-submitted for endorsement to BOP 10 days prior to implementation. Certification program packages should be submitted to the BOP EARN resource account, RA-BOPEARNPOLICY@PA.GOV.

Vocational Education not provided by the EARN vendor (Credentialing and Non-Credentialing)

Hours of participation and/or certifications will only be recognized for those educational institutions which are approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to grant degrees or certifications, and are operating as a licensed business as registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State (DOS).

Online education/certification will only be accepted if the on-line institution is recognized by the United States Department of Education as an accredited institution.

EARN vendors must be diligent in ensuring they are connecting their participants with education institutions and programs that will offer the individuals viable and suitable career pathways.

PDE approved training facilities can be searched at the following link:

<http://www.edna.ed.state.pa.us/Screens/wfSearchEntity.aspx>

Businesses licensed with DOS can be searched at the following link:

<https://www.corporations.pa.gov/Search/CorpSearch>

On-line colleges approved by the US Department of Education can be searched at the following link:

<http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx>

Absences

Excused Absences

Clients engaged in unpaid work activities may be given participation credit for excused absences. A client may receive excused absence credit for up to 16 hours in a month and no more than 80 hours of excused absences within a rolling 12-month period, excluding DHS recognized holidays.

For a client to receive credit for excused time, they must have been scheduled to participate on the day and time of the absence. Credit may only be given for the number of hours the client would have been scheduled on that day. For example, if a client is scheduled to participate in Activity 24 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Monday, but is excused for a medical appointment during that time, she may be credited with three hours of excused time.

When available, the EARN service provider is to collect documentation from a third party describing or documenting the reason for the absence. If third party verification is not available for a particular absence, the EARN is to document the reason for the use of excused time in the case narrative and list the time as excused on the EARN attendance sheet.

Clients can be excused from participation for the following reasons:

- Medical appointments for the client or dependents.
- CAO appointments.
- WIC appointments.
- Legal appointments.

- School appointments, including school events.
- Counseling appointments.
- Housing appointments.
- Obtaining child care.
- Child support appointments.
- Obtaining birth certificates.
- Obtaining documents needed for eligibility for DHS programs.
- Obtaining transportation.
- Other appointments deemed necessary by the contractor.

The use of excused absences should be discussed with the client; the client should be notified of the excused absence hours used and hours remaining.

An excused absence tracking log should be completed and kept up to date. Attachment H is provided as a template.

For working clients, paid annual, sick, or paid time off, as reflected on a client's paystub or pay statement may be included in the number of hours tracked for that time period.

Holidays

Clients receive credit for participation on the following days recognized by DHS as holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

For a client to receive credit for holiday time, they must have been scheduled to participate on that day. Credit may only be given for the number of hours the client would have been scheduled.

Make-Up Time

For clients that do not meet their required number of hours in any week, the EARN service provider is required to develop a plan for the client to make-up the hours during the month in which the hours were missed. If clients are unable to make-up hours within the month, they should still be encouraged to make-up missed hours.

Make-up plans should be developed between the client and case manager within a week of absence. The plan should be maintained in the case record.

EARN providers should consider developing a make-up plan as opposed to using excused absence time when feasible.

Data Entry

EARN service providers may have their own data information system to track program referrals, rejections, enrollments, participant data, activities and terminations. However, CIS, CWDS and DocuShare are the official data systems that DHS will use to validate a client's activities and evaluate achievement of outcomes. EARN service providers hired to perform data entry are required to attend CWDS training.

DHS has instituted restrictions on timeframes for the data entry of client information into CWDS. These restrictions are necessary to ensure the timely transfer of information from CWDS to CIS, federal and state reporting purposes, and timely action by CAOs affecting clients' eligibility for benefits or continued participation in EARN. The EARN service provider must complete data entry into CWDS as follows:

- Hours of participation can be data entered into CWDS based on the attendance form. Data entry can then be reconciled when the verification is received.
- For all activities other than AC33 – activity and hours must be entered and, if needed, updated by the 15th of the month after the month of participation; e.g., July hours must be entered by August 15.
- For AC 33 – activity must be entered by the end of the month following the month of participation and hours must be entered and, if needed, updated by the end of the second month after the month of participation; e.g., July hours must be entered by August 31 and can be edited until September 30.

Any data not entered by the data entry deadlines will not count towards the performance based payments or performance outcomes.

Mathematical rounding will be utilized to round clients' hours: round down to the next whole hour if the fraction is .49 or below, and round up to the next whole hour if the fraction is .5 or above. Mathematical rounding will be instituted at the end of each week per activity.

EARN service providers must promptly and correctly data enter information into CWDS. It is essential to capture all client activity hours towards meeting federally-mandated TANF participation requirements.

All information entered into CWDS must match the information on the EARN attendance sheets (Attachment A). All service providers must develop a data reconciliation process to ensure that all information in CWDS is accurate.

If the client's TANF closes for any reason, the system will move the client from the enrolled screen to the 45-day hold screen in CWDS. If the client is in retention and volunteers to remain

in EARN, the EARN service provider is to move the client into the Extended Hold Status and should continue to enter hours for the client under all appropriate activity codes.

NOTE: TANF closing may impact the client’s eligibility for Special Allowances and should be discussed with the CAO.

NOTE: EARN service providers may refer to the CWDS manual for further information on the operation of the CWDS. Data entry questions can be directed to the CWDS helpdesk at 1-866-236-6297.

EARN Case Record Requirements

The EARN service provider will create a confidential EARN Case Record. The EARN Case Record must be kept in a secure location with limited accessibility. Staff not associated with the EARN case may not have access to the EARN Case Record or narrative.

The EARN service provider will document the following in the EARN Case Record narrative:

- Date, time, and location of all EARN related contacts.
- Purpose and outcome of all EARN related contacts.
- Any changes in the client’s conditions or circumstances.
- Solutions offered and the client’s responses.
- Services and supports requested or provided.
- Pertinent information received from the CAO.
- Any other relevant information.

NOTE: The EARN service providers are encouraged to document their narratives using the CWDS Create Case Progress Notes screen. Additionally, it is suggested to identify case notes with specific topics, for example “Incentives”.

The following documents should be maintained in the client’s file and must be available for upload on DocuShare for validation purposes.

- AMR
- Service Plan
- Attendance Sheets, including make-up plans
- Job Search Logs
- Excused Absence Logs
- Release of Information Form
- Employment Verification Form (EVF)

- Verification of Retention
- Other Relevant Information

All documentation with the client’s signature must be kept in paper format. Documents must be retained for a period of seven years.

Internal Data Reconciliation

The EARN program is evaluated based on CIS and CWDS information; therefore, it is imperative that the contractor schedule time at least once a month to reconcile the data found throughout all systems and case files used by the contractor to ensure the accuracy of the data used to track participants.

At a minimum, the following data elements must be consistent in all the data systems.	Critical data that must match across all reporting systems.
Client Information System	Project begin and end dates
Commonwealth Workforce Development System	Activities, including begin and end dates
Job Placement and Retention Report	Time and attendance information.
Case Records	Employment information (employer, job start and end dates, medical information, wages, etc.)

The CWDS Enrollment, Closings and Contractor History Reports must be accessed and utilized for reconciliation purposes. Future CWDS enhancements will include reports that can be used to compare contractor’s performance against program standards

SECTION 6 – TERMINATIONS

Project Termination

Project termination codes primarily reflect program outcomes, including whether or not the client secured employment. The EARN service provider must include the reason for termination in the narrative of the client's case record.

Termination codes 3, 5, and 7 must be data entered within three working days of the date of decision to terminate. For clients terminating with employment/retention codes 1 and 8, the termination date may date back to the final day worked which completes six month retention period as verified by paystubs.

Clients who miss three consecutive scheduled days of program activity and who do not report on the fourth day must be terminated from the program. Clients who report at any time on the fourth day should not be terminated.

Clients must be expeditiously terminated when attendance falls below acceptable levels.

The CAO and contractor members of the DST can decide jointly to terminate an underperforming client even if attendance does not warrant it under the three-day absence rule. Alternatively, if it is determined by the CAO that a client who missed three or more consecutive scheduled days or fell short of their required hours would benefit from remaining in the program, and there is a plan of action with the client for him/her to be re-engaged immediately, the client may be retained in the program. The plan of action should include using excused and/or unexcused absences and make-up time to remain within a reasonable level of compliance with their AMR. This should be duly noted in the contractor's case narrative and the decision documented by the CAO. In no circumstance should the contractor make the decision to retain the client without approval from the CAO and contact with the client.

When a client moves out of his or her county of residence, the EARN provider must terminate the project.

Project Termination Codes

Termination Type	Code	Clarifications
Part-time Employment. Client obtains employment for 20 to 29 hours per week and completes retention as validated by CWDS reports/Division of Program Implementation (DPI)	1	The termination date may date back to the final day worked which completes six month retention period as verified by paystubs.
Full-time Employment. Client obtains employment for 30 hours or more per week and completes retention as validated by CWDS report/DPI.	8	
<p>Withdraws or Terminates Without Good Cause. Clients who withdraw from the program without good cause, as well as clients who fail to comply with the contractor’s absence policies.</p> <p>This includes clients who are terminated from the program for missing three consecutive scheduled days of activity and who do not report on the fourth day.</p> <p>It also includes participants who have been placed, but terminated without meeting retention requirements.</p>	3	Good cause is determined by the CAO after the client is terminated. Use code 3 unless the CAO determines at the time of termination that good cause will be granted, at which time code 7 is appropriate.
<p>Completion of plan AMR activities with no employment. This termination code is primarily used for Work Ready clients who have completed both phases of the WR Program, and are transferred back to the CAO or to the EARN program.</p>	5	Work Ready code only. As the EARN program’s purpose is to transition clients to the workforce, this would normally not be an appropriate code for use by EARN vendors. The vendor should contact the BOP EARN resource account, RA-BOPEARNPOLICY@PA.GOV for clarification before using this code.
Other. Client’s reason for termination does not fit other termination codes listed here.	7	

SECTION 7 – PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS & STANDARDS

Performance Standards/Goals

Certain performance standards will be used to assess the effectiveness of the service provider. Performance standards for EARN PY 2016–2017 are successful attainment of job placement, job retention and credentialing.

All performance standards will be calculated from reports generated by CWDS and will be verified for accuracy by DHS.

Each of the three performance standards will be paid based on a per individual basis. For each client meeting the standard detailed in the following table, the grantee will be eligible, upon verification and available budget, for a payment based on the client meeting that particular goal.

DHS requires that any and all performance funds awarded to EARN providers must be reinvested into the EARN program.

Performance Goal	Definition	GOAL	Payment Amount
Placement Tier 1	<p>Clients must attain Unsubsidized Employment (AC 33), working a minimum of 80 hours in a four consecutive week period. The four week period must begin within the 180 days of the enrollment date.</p> <p>The 180 day time limit for placing a client into employment can be extended if the client enrolls in an educational or training program leading to a certificate or diploma by the 90th day of enrollment in EARN. Upon entry of activity code 24, the 180 day time frame for job placement will be extended for the time the client is enrolled in the program up to 180 additional days.</p>	Payment based on number of individual clients meeting standard	\$900
Placement Tier 2	<p>Must meet all of the standards for Tier 1 placement.</p> <p>Additionally, client is making at least \$10/hr at any time during the current EARN enrollment.</p>	Payment based on number of individual clients meeting standard	<p>\$300</p> <p>Total for meeting Tier 1 and Tier 2 = \$1,200</p>
Placement Tier 3	<p>Must meet all of the standards for Tier 1 placement.</p> <p>Additionally, client must have earnings that result in the closure of the TANF budget.</p> <p><i>Note: The client need not have met Tier 2 to meet Tier 3.</i></p>	Payment based on number of individual clients meeting standard	<p>\$500 (if Tier 2 is also met) \$800 (if Tier 2 is not met)</p> <p>Total for meeting Tier 1, 2 & 3 = \$1,700 Tier 1 & Tier 3 = \$1,700</p>
Retention	<p>After a client meets the Placement Tier 1 goal, the client must retain Unsubsidized Employment (AC 33) of at least 80 hours in any given calendar month for up to six consecutive months following the placement month. A client may meet the retention goal up to six times in the six months immediately following the placement month. A client may not have hours counted in the same calendar month for both placement and retention.</p>	Payment based on number of individual clients meeting standard	<p>Level 1 (one month): \$100 Level 2 (two months): \$300 Level 3 (three months): \$500 Level 4 (four months): \$700 Level 5 (five months): \$900 Level 6 (six months): \$1,100 Total : \$3,600</p>
Credentialing	<p>In the credentialing component, a client must receive a diploma or certification that will provide the client with a valuable and marketable skill directly related to employment. Limited to one credentialing payment per client per enrollment.</p>	Payment based on number of individual clients meeting standard	\$500

Monitoring

DHS will monitor the EARN service providers through review of data systems, as well as site visits to review program compliance. DHS will also conduct training and information sessions with the service providers.

EARN service providers that do not meet minimum outcomes and expectations will be asked to submit a corrective action plan addressing the deficiencies upon notification of the deficiencies. Regular progress reports on actions to correct the deficiencies will also be required.

EARN service providers that have multiple areas of deficiencies or those who do not show progress as a result of the corrective action plans may be required to participate in meetings to plan and review progress.

SECTION 8 – PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

Client Incentives

Client Incentives are positive reinforcements to promote client participation. Incentives are not based on need but instead based on client meeting an objective or standard.

The EARN service provider must maintain a list of all incentives issued that includes at a minimum the following information: amount and type of incentive issued, name of individual receiving incentive, date issued and reason for issuance of incentive. All incentives given to a participant should also be recorded in the CWDS case narrative. The issuances of client incentives are subject to monitoring.

Supportive Services

EARN service providers will not issue special allowances to clients. Clients may continue to be eligible for CAO issued special allowances. The EARN provider may assist the clients in making the request for supportive services from the CAO.

Confidentiality

All clients must be assured that the personal data they provide will be confidential.

The EARN service provider will keep client information obtained from the client or other sources confidential. It will only be released upon the client's written approval, obtained on DHS approved Authorization for Release of Information Forms (Attachment E), and only for the purpose specified by the client.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the privacy regulations at 45 CFR, Sections 160-504 and 164.530 indicate that all personal health information should be retained for a period of seven years. All EARN information should be kept for a period of seven years, after which the information should be shredded.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Each EARN service provider will provide or arrange for the provision of adequate interpretive services for all EARN services and activities.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services. All contractors must comply with the ADA.

Local Management Committee (LMC) Meetings

LMC meetings are required, but the frequency of the meetings is to be determined locally. However, service providers must cooperate with their local partners. All local E&T program providers are required to attend as this meeting is responsible for the coordination of operations and services provided in the local areas to public assistance recipients.

Direct Service Team (DST) Meetings

The frequency of the meetings is to be determined locally; however, service providers must cooperate with their local partners.

Contacts

Questions regarding EARN program policy should be addressed to the Bureau of Policy at RA-BOPEARNPOLICY@PA.GOV.

Questions regarding EARN program validation requirements should be addressed to the Bureau of Program Evaluation at RA-BPE-DPI@PA.GOV.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A Attendance Sheet
ATTACHMENT B Community Service Desk Guide
ATTACHMENT C PA 1694
ATTACHMENT D PA 590
ATTACHMENT E Confidential Release of Info
ATTACHMENT F EVF
ATTACHMENT G Validation
ATTACHMENT H Excused Absence Record