

Centering Young Black Men – WIOA Youth Programs

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County’s (WDC) mission is to champion a workforce and learning system that allows our region to be a world leader in producing a vibrant economy and lifelong employment and training opportunities for every resident. On January 10, 2024, the WDC released Request for Proposals (RFP) No. 23-01, “Centering Young Black Men-Youth Programs,” with funding in accordance with resources coming from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The RFP was designed for community-based organizations that will conduct intensive, innovative community outreach to youth ages 18-24 who need training, employment and/or support services. The contract awards will begin July 1, 2024, and end June 30, 2025.

This RFP represents a key strategy and investment aligned with the WDC’s Regional Strategic Plan. The overarching goal is to strengthen the region’s workforce development system by:

- Expanding racial equity and community-driven goals within the region’s unified workforce development system and strategy.
- Identifying specific marginalized communities currently underserved by the workforce system and explicitly targeting funding for culturally competent services to reach those communities, justice-involved, LGBTQ, homeless, foster system-involved.
- Pooling and coordinating resources to close system gaps, eliminate redundancies and increase efficiencies.
- Expanding access to training programs and navigation services along career pathways.
- Creating a unified regional, coordinated, and efficient system for engaging industry.
- Leveraging public and private funding streams to ensure holistic, flexible services.

Proposals were required to demonstrate how services will be provided to address alternative learning modalities in a Post-COVID-19 and implement innovative youth employment programs with an emphasis on the following: behavioral health, race and social justice, entrepreneurship, and youth leadership advisory. This RFP seeks to both support young people before they disconnect from formal education (in-school youth) and once they have disconnected from education or work (out-of-school youth). The RFP centers young black men, a group that is traditionally underfunded and overrepresented among out-of-school youth and low-income status relative to the total King County population while addressing the se three tracks¹:

1. Preparing youth for the workforce through post-secondary education.
2. Re-engagement and advocating for youth to and through Open Doors programs.
3. Revealing opportunities to youth through non-traditional work experiences and apprenticeship opportunities that lead to high-wage quality jobs.

The WDC conducted an RFP question and answer (Q&A) period between the release of the RFP and February 7th, 2024, during which time the WDC answered 13 questions submitted by prospective bidders, posted in Q&A digests on the WDC website. A virtual bidders conference was held on January 24th, 2024, attended by 41 individuals representing over 28 organizations. Proposals in response to RFP No. 23-01 were due to the WDC on February 14th, 2024.

THE RFP RATING PROCESS & ANALYSIS

The WDC received 11 proposals and were certified as compliant. A 5-person evaluation panel was established to review and rate the proposals, consisting of: WDC Board Members, staff from other Workforce Development Boards, community leaders, and local government staff with expertise in workforce development.

After an initial orientation meeting on February 20th, 2024, the panelists reviewed and independently rated the proposals. A final evaluation conference was held on March 8th, 2024, where panel members reviewed cumulative proposal scores, discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals, assessed budget proposals, and consulted with one another to reach a consensus recommendation. Following the panel’s recommendation, the procurement process was reviewed and certified by the WDC’s Chief Executive Officer.

The evaluation panel would like to highlight the following strengths of proposals.

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	TRACKS	AMOUNT REQUESTED
1. Boys and Girls Club of King County	ALL – In School Youth & Out Of School	\$450,103.72
	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of youths being served for concise case management and service. • More opportunities work experience for the youth being served. • Directing more services to integrating new and innovative programs with the best interest of the youth being served. Suggested Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial 	

¹ Focus Tracks – Appendix (Page 4)

NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION	Target Population	AMOUNT REQUESTED
2. Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle	ALL – Out of School Youth and In-School Youth	\$741,868.25
	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incredibly detailed, proven outcomes (Thorough around barriers to address intentions in the workplace and how they support youth can complete the task in 13 months). • Capacity to serve young black men within the Maritime sector focus. • Staff representative of the population served. <p>Suggested Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial 	

RECOMMENDATION

The evaluation panel recommends funding the following organizations for from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

Organization	12-month recommended funding
Boys and Girls Club of King County	\$450,000
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle/Maritime	\$450,000
Total: Available Funding	\$900,000

ACTION REQUESTED

The committee is asked to consider and approve the above recommendations for contract awards. If approved, new contracts will begin on July 1, 2025, and end June 30, 2025.

APPENDIX:

Three Focal Tracks (In School Youth/Out of School Youth)	
1	Preparing youth for the workforce through post-secondary education
2	Re-engagement and advocating for youth to and through Open Doors programs
3	Revealing opportunities to youth through non-traditional work experiences and apprenticeship opportunities that lead to high-wage quality jobs

