

Scope of Services

Background

The City of Columbia will receive a total of \$25.2 million in ARPA funds to address health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Columbia City Council has dedicated the first half of the funding to be used for homelessness, community violence, behavioral crisis care mental health services, and workforce development.

The City of Columbia is interested in collaborating with organizations to focus on the implementation of a coordinated, community-based strategy for workforce development in the City of Columbia.

The City of Columbia seeks to invest in effective and innovative workforce development programs run by eligible and qualified nonprofit organizations, unless a for-profit organization is demonstrated to be the most cost effective and appropriate service provider available. The proposal submissions should clearly define how the grant award will support the applicant organization's ability to increase the workforce preparedness, career awareness, education and/or skills attainment, workforce participation and job retention.

Overarching goals associated with the Workforce Development funding include:

- Increased workforce preparedness
- Increased career awareness
- Increased education and/or skill attainment
- Increased workforce participation
- Improved job retention

This request solicits proposals for projects with reasonable eligible project budgeted expenses, and a plan to become self-sufficient within 3 years. Proposed project activity measures should reflect 36-months of activity. Outcome objectives should be reflective of the organization's ability to track long-term changes in the population served during the entire project period.

The proposed submissions must include a sustainability plan to address funding beyond the payments provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and must also provide a plan to become fully self-sufficient within 3 years.

Applicants should be able to cite the evidence basis for their proposal. Applicants should cite specific neighborhoods and/or populations they propose to serve. Applicants should also describe their approach with an equity focus and how they will include community engagement and mobilization.

The following are examples of programming and services:

- **School to Career** – Proposed initiatives should help young people make the connection between education and a successful career. Youth must be encouraged to remain in secondary school and graduate, or, if they left school before completion, to obtain a high school equivalency diploma. All youth should be encouraged to pursue post-secondary education and/or training. Proposed programs should reflect employer input in the design and vocational training content of their programs and should enlist employers to expose youth to their businesses and related career opportunities. By thus involving the employers, programs will create an iterative learning environment in which academic and employment skills are interwoven.
- **Employment Opportunities and Partnerships** – Programs should identify and engage employment sectors that offer strong opportunities for our residents, namely, high-growth sectors with a variety of entry-level positions and the potential for career progression. Based on research and labor market analysis, target sectors could include the health, retail and customer service, construction, and hospitality and tourism; although it also recognizes that other employment niches in local communities may offer similarly strong opportunities. In addition, the City encourages the creation of partnerships among training providers, schools, and businesses to address the workforce needs of employers and deliver the desired outcomes for this population.
- **Youth Development** – Initiatives that reflect a strong point of service methodology and recognized youth development principles that emphasize the cognitive, social, and behavioral competencies that help youth succeed as adults. Effective programs adopt an asset-based approach, in which services are personalized and focus on developing individual strengths and interests. In keeping with these principles, programs must also promote positive relationships among adult staff and youth participants and provide the support and follow-up services needed to address the range of individual challenges participants confront.
- **Comprehensive Services** – The most successful programs include the full range of supportive services in-house and/or facilitate seamless access to other appropriately qualified providers.
- **Maker Spaces** - Funded makerspaces should be an innovative, collaborative work space for making, learning, exploring and sharing. These spaces are often to help build capacity for and open to kids, adults, and entrepreneurs and have a variety of maker equipment (e.g. 3D printers, laser cutters, cnc machines, soldering irons and even sewing machines).
- **Job Readiness Programs** – Effective job readiness programs assist participants in developing good work habits to facilitate long term success. They could cover obstacles

in the workplace, resume writing, financial literacy, leadership and relationship skills, as well as additional skills to navigate work environments.

System and Community Partnerships: Funded applicants must detail how they will collaborate with appropriate community partners (e.g., service providers, faith-based organizations, relevant community boards, food pantries, city, county, Columbia Public Schools) in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. This collaboration should include, but is not limited to, establishing partnerships with service providers to receive referrals from, for example, credible messengers that may be in need of outside services to address their clients' service needs.

Applicants must demonstrate an equity focus and process for meaningful community engagement.

Contract renewal depends on performance and funding availability.