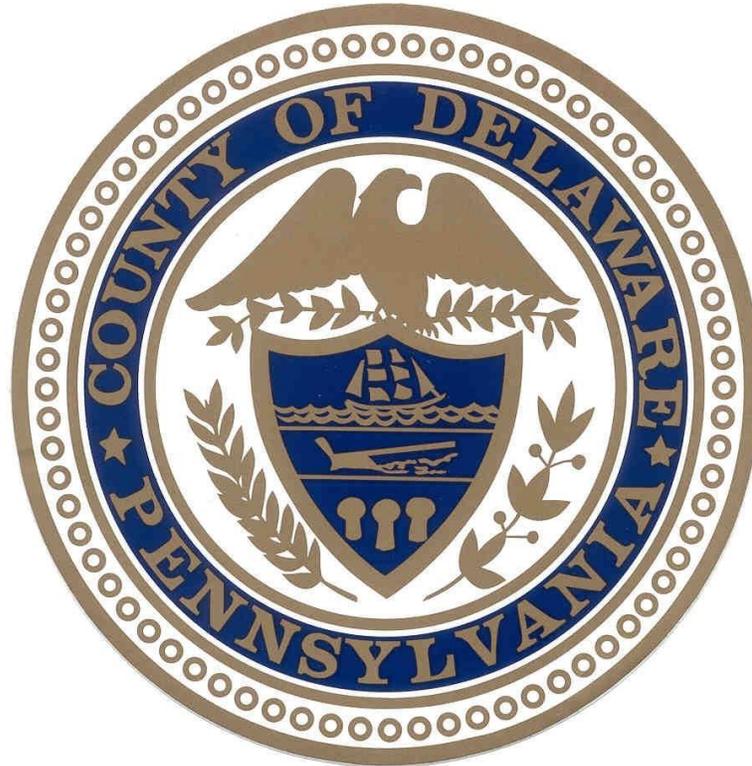


# **Delaware County Workforce Development Board**



## **Request for Proposals May 1, 2021 – February 1, 2022 Impact of COVID 19 on SEPA Disconnected Youth Study**

Proposals Due: April 20, 2021

RFP Release Date: March 23, 2021

The Delaware County Workforce Development Board is an equal opportunity employer.

Auxiliary aids and service are available upon request to persons with disabilities.

## General Information

The Workforce Development Board partners of the Southeast Pennsylvania region have a long history of working together to achieve maximum collective impact in producing a highly skilled workforce available to existing and prospective employers on a regional basis. The partners embrace the vision of the Governor's Combined State Plan that sets a framework for multiple levels of government working efficiently and in concert toward shared goals ("government that works"), expanding the education and training routes that lead to skills documentation valued by employers ("schools that teach"), and the transition to higher wage jobs tied to higher skills in the workforce through stronger alignment of economic development and workforce development actions ("jobs that pay").

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 had a sudden, devastating effect on the regional economy and workforce system in Southeast Pennsylvania. Industries that had been thriving in region were halted while others struggled with supply chain and workforce needs to meet demand. The Workforce Development Board partners of the Southeast Pennsylvania region's collaborative spirit proved critical as the region gathered quickly to assess the impact and begin an immediate plan of action. Leaders across Southeastern Pennsylvania representing both economic and workforce development have convened regularly throughout the pandemic to strategize response and recovery.

The lead entity for this study will be the Delaware County Workforce Development Board (DCWDB). DCWDB is designated by the Delaware County Council to provide staff support and act as the administrative entity and the fiscal agent for the operation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Programs in the Delaware County Workforce Development Area (WDA). The DCWDB is a business, education, and community board that is empowered to lead workforce development in Delaware County. It is the mission of the DCWDB to serve as the local entity, responsible for the strategic planning and promotion of an effective workforce development system in Delaware County that responds to regional labor market needs.

## Statement of Purpose

This study is commissioned by the workforce development boards of Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Philadelphia, and Montgomery counties to gather qualitative and quantitative information on youth age 16-24 who are neither in the workforce nor pursuing education. The study will help guide county-based and regional strategies to reengage youth in educational and occupation programs.

On behalf of the Southeast Pennsylvania workforce development boards, DCWDB is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify an individual or organization to conduct a thorough study of the impact of COVID 19 on young adults age 16-24 and their connection to education and the workforce. The timeframe to conduct and report on this study is May 1, 2021 to February 1, 2022. All interested parties are highly encouraged to review this RFP carefully to gain a clear understanding of the expectations regarding this study.

## Contract Award & Funding Available

Please be advised that the level of funding available is subject to change but will not exceed \$125,000. Any proposal submitted in response to this solicitation is not a legally binding document. However, the contents of the proposal of the successful bidder will become contractual obligations and failure to accept these obligations in a contractual agreement may result in the cancellation of the award. Staff will negotiate and execute contracts with the bidder approved for funding. These discussions will take place after final funding approval and may include such items as budget, cost, program design, service levels, location, target population, projections, and clarifications.

### Procurement Timeline:

- Public Notice March 15-22
- Bidder's Conference March 23, 2021 at 1pm
- Release RFP on website March 23, 2021
- Proposals Due April 20, 2021 at 5pm
- Expected Date for Notification of Award April 27, 2021
- Start Date for Contract May 1, 2021

### Bidders' Conference and Questions

A bidders' conference will be held virtually on March 23, 2021 at 1pm. Information will be provided on the DCWDB's website found at [www.delcoworks.org](http://www.delcoworks.org). Registration will be required by email to [schwabeh@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:schwabeh@co.delaware.pa.us).

At the conference, the DCWDB staff will review the requirements of the RFP and accept questions from attendees regarding the RFP. All interested applicants are encouraged to attend, although attendance is not required to submit a proposal.

### Submission of Proposals

Submission of proposals unnecessarily elaborate or lengthy is not encouraged. Proposals are limited to eight (8) pages, excluding the coversheet and attachments. Proposals must be submitted in a 12-point font, using standard 8.5" by 11" paper with 1" margins. Page numbers must be provided in the footer. Proposals will only be accepted by email and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on April 20, 2021. Proposal must be emailed to Kate McGeever [mcgeeverk@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:mcgeeverk@co.delaware.pa.us) with a subject line of "COVID 19 Impact on SEPA Disconnected Youth Study."

Proposals received after this time and date will not be considered for review. Timely receipt of the proposals is the sole responsibility of the proposer.

## Overview: WIOA

The Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) passed in July 2014 and full implementation was required in stages from July 1, 2015 to July 1, 2016. The purpose of WIOA programs is to move toward a higher level of service for employers and job seekers through better alignment of education, economic development, and workforce development systems at the state, regional, and local levels. WIOA maintains the primary service delivery structure, the nation's network of one-stop career centers (PA CareerLink® centers), but challenges center Service Providers with high expectations for partner investments, system leadership, engaging employers, sector strategies, prioritizing services for under-served populations and achieving better performance outcomes. Emphasis is placed on achievement of credentials that are valued by multiple employers and are stackable toward more advanced certifications and degrees.

All WIOA information throughout this RFP is designated through the guidance provided by the US Department of Labor and the PA Department of Labor and Industry's Bureau of Workforce Development Administration and is subject to change by these funding organizations.

Please visit the USDOL website at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa> for a more thorough overview of WIOA.

## Overview: WIOA Out-of-School Youth

For the purposes of this study, a Disconnected Youth will be age 16-24 and not engaged in school or work. This broad definition will allow for the inclusion of young adults on indefinite leave from higher education as a result of COVID 19, young frontline workers who have left the workforce due to COVID 19, and youth who are missing from school due to learning barriers brought on by COVID 19.

The strategies and solutions that will grow from this study will address a clearly defined group of out-of-school youth. WIOA defines an eligible Out-of-School Youth is an individual who is:

- Not attending any school (as defined by State law).
- Not younger than 16 or older than age 24; **and**
- Identified as one or more of the following:
- A school dropout or a youth who is within the age compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter, and is not enrolled with the in-school provider with plans to return or remain in school
- A recipient of a secondary school diploma who is a low-income individual and is-Basic skills deficient or an English language learner
- An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
- A homeless individual, (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6))), a homeless child or youth (as defined in section 752 (2) of the Mc Kinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act 42 U.S.C. 11434a (2))), a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677) or in an out-of-home placement.
- An individual who is pregnant or parenting
- A youth who is an individual with a disability
- A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

This study of Disconnected Youth should reference existing research including:

Berks County Disconnected Youth Study found at:

<https://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/WDB/Documents/Berks%20County%20Disconnected%20Young%20Adult%20Report%2017-0728.pdf>

A Decade Undone found at: <https://measureofamerica.org/youth-disconnection-2020/>

## Eligible Applicants

Entities eligible to apply to conduct the COVID 19 Impact on SEPA Disconnected Youth Study include institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, workforce intermediaries, private for-profit entities, government agencies, or any interested organization/individual that is not a restricted entity, can carry out study.

The selected contractor will be accountable to the DCWDB and SEPA Workforce Development Boards. Additionally, the selected contractor will be required to adhere to all laws and policies of federal, state, and local governments that apply to the funding sources.

Eligible applicants must be in good standing with the federal government, must not be debarred, and must have proof of insurance. Applicants shall disclose all potential conflicts of interest in their proposal, including but not limited to relationships with training or other service providers.

Any governmental, nonprofit or private-for-profit organization(s) may apply. Responders must have knowledge, background and extensive experience conducting community studies and must have significant qualifications in the use of contemporary research and reporting methods. The selected contractor will be selected through a competitive bid process established by the DCWDB and SEPA Workforce Development Boards. Emphasis will be placed on applicants that propose creative and innovative research strategies, incorporate best practices, and demonstrate the capacity deliver meaningful strategic recommendations.

## General Policies

- The DCWDB is not liable for any cost associated with responding to this RFP and will not authorize such costs as part of the contract with the selected organization.
- The DCWDB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received and to cancel or reissue this RFP in part or its entirety.
- The DCWDB reserves the right to award a contract for any items/services solicited via this RFP in any quantity the DCWDB determines is in its best interest.
- The DCWDB reserves the right to correct any error(s) and/or make changes to this solicitation as it deems necessary.
- The DCWDB reserves the right to negotiate the final terms of any and all contracts or agreements with proposers selected and any such terms negotiated as a result of this RFP may be renegotiated and/or amended in order to successfully meet the needs of the workforce area.
- The DCWDB reserves the right to contact any individual, agency, employer, or grantees listed in the proposal; to contact others who may have experience and/or knowledge of the proposer's relevant performance and/or qualifications; and to request additional information from any and all proposers.
- The DCWDB reserves the right to conduct an on-site review of records, systems, procedures, including credit and criminal background checks, etc. of any entity selected for funding. This may occur either

before or after the award of a contract or agreement. Misrepresentation of the proposer's ability to perform as stated in the proposal may result in cancellation of any contract or agreement awarded.

- The DCWDB reserves the right to withdraw or reduce the amount of an award or to cancel any contract or agreement resulting from this procurement if adequate funding is not received from the U.S. Department of Labor via the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry or other funding sources or due to legislative changes.
- Proposers shall not under penalty of law offer or provide any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any officer, member, employee, or agent of the DCWDB for the purpose of having an influencing effect toward their own proposal or any other proposal submitted hereunder.
- No employee, officer, or agent of the DCWDB shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by WIOA funds if a conflict of interest, or potential conflict, would be involved.
- Proposers shall not engage in any activity that will restrict or eliminate competition. Violation of this provision may cause a proposer's bid to be rejected. This does not preclude partnerships or subcontracts.
- All proposals submitted must be an original work product of the proposers. The copying, paraphrasing, or otherwise using substantial portions of the work product from other entities and submitted hereunder as original work of the proposer is not permitted. Failure to adhere to this instruction may cause the proposal to be disqualified and rejected.
- The contents of a successful proposal may become a contractual obligation if selected for award of a contract. Failure of the proposer to accept this obligation may result in cancellation of the award. No plea of error or mistake shall be available to the successful proposer as a basis for release of proposed services at the stated price/cost. Any damages accruing to the DCWDB as a result of a proposer's failure to contract may be recovered from the proposer.
- A contract with the selected proposer may be withheld at the DCWDB's sole discretion if issues of contract, questions of Federal or State regulatory non-compliance, or questioned/disallowed costs exist until such issues are satisfactorily resolved. The DCWDB may withdraw award of a contract if the resolution is not satisfactory to the Board.
- The respondent assures that WIOA funded services, activities and agreements will comply fully with the provisions of WIOA, Section 188, Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity regulations (29 CFR Part 38), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

## Scope of Work: Impact of COVID 19 on SEPA Disconnected Youth Study

This study is commissioned by the workforce development boards of Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Philadelphia, and Montgomery counties to gather qualitative and quantitative information on young adults age 16-24 who are neither in the workforce nor pursuing education. The study will help guide county-based and regional strategies to reengage young adults in educational and occupation programs.

### The study must address the following questions:

- What are the attributes of disconnected youth including educational attainment, skills, and work experience?
- How has COVID 19 impacted the number of disconnected youths, by county and in the region? Include specific indicators including withdrawal from secondary/post-secondary education and unemployment.
- How have secondary indicators, including mental health, drug/alcohol abuse, etc., impacted disconnection among youth?
- What entities (assets) are attempting to reach disconnected youth? Include systems (Justice, CYS, Foster Care), community-based organizations (LGBTQ, homeless), educational, and faith communities.
- What are the gaps in services for disconnected youth?
- What are successful channels and strategies for reaching disconnected youth?

### Data to address these questions must include at a minimum:

- Qualitative input from focus groups of disconnected youth, service providers, parents, and employers. The selected contractor will be responsible for recruiting focus group participants.
- Mapping of resources available to youth.
- Quantitative input with valid and clearly identified sources.

### Deliverables for this study include:

- Presentation of report to the participating workforce development boards and stakeholder, with possibility of county-specific presentation of findings.
- Report must include research-based recommendation for county-based and regional strategies to reconnect to disconnected youth.
- Social media appropriate documents with key findings.

## Proposal Format

The proposal for the COVID 19 Impact on SEPA Disconnected Youth Study must be submitted as outlined below.

## Proposal Cover Sheet

The proposal for the COVID 19 Impact on SEPA Disconnected Youth Study must be submitted using the Cover Page template in appendix.

## Executive Summary

The following should not be more than one (1) page.

- Overview of your organization’s qualifications.
- Briefly describe your organization’s mission and/or vision.
- Concise description of the proposed research process and tools.
- Amount of funding requested for the project.

## Organizational Overview

The following should not be more than one (1) page.

- Basic organizational description including year established, organizational incorporation status and where incorporated, governance structure, mission, principal programs and services, executive leadership, annual budget, partners and/or subcontractors, and number of staff.
- Demonstrate that your organization’s eligibility to participate based on the Eligible Applicants description.
- Experience in research of similar size and scope that are specified in this RFP, including but not limited to populations, region, and research questions.

## Narrative

A proposal narrative should not exceed six (6) pages and should address the full scope of work.

- Provide the methodology to be used in the execution of this study. How will youth be located and engaged? How will systems (Justice, CYS, Foster Care), community-based organizations (LGBTQ, homeless), educational, and faith communities be engaged?
- Provide examples of similar work, specifically with disconnected youth and workforce development.
- Provide a timeline for the project including monthly meetings to provide updates of progress.

## Budget

A budget must be included using the budget forms listed in Appendix. Costs included in the proposed budget cannot already be paid by another source; they must be actual costs incurred in delivering the study. Please note that while an “other” category is included, cost should be categorized as “other”

judiciously. All costs should be accounted for in the budget line items supported by a strong narrative justifying why the funds are needed/critical to the program.

## Budget Narrative

Provide a narrative to accompany the budget that describes the purpose of each cost, explains how all costs are estimated and justifies the need for all costs in meeting contract requirements. This section should not be more than one (1) page.

- Include staff positions, percentage of time dedicated to each position, and proposed wage/salary. What are the qualifications of the organization’s key program management and financial staff, and to what extent will they be involved in this project?
- How will financial information be made available for monitoring and auditing purposes?
- Describe your experience with cost reimbursement contracts. Describe how the Bidder’s organization will financially support the costs of doing business until an invoice can be submitted and paid by the Boards’ fiscal agent
- Describe any work you are doing or may be proposing to do in addition to this contract. Estimate what percentage of your overall organization’s work would be represented by this contract. Include the organization’s major funding sources. If the proposal is from two or more organizations, whether partners or subcontractors, provide the major funding source for each.

## Proposal Review Scoring Rubric

Scoring for required sections of the proposal will be assigned as follows:

Points Awarded Per Category	
Proposal Cover Sheet	Required, but not scored
Executive Summary	Required, but not scored
Organizational Overview	5 points
Narrative	70 points
Budget and Budget Narrative	25 points
Total Points Available	100 points

## Appeal Process

This Request for Proposal contains an allowance for written appeals for disputes involving this procurement action. Appeal dispute sources may include, but are not limited to:

- Unfair competition in the decision-making process
- Illegal/improper act or violation of law

Written appeals must be made to Kate McGeever, Executive Director, Delaware County Workforce Development Board. All disputes will be reviewed by the Executive Director and Customer Services Committee with written response in twenty (20) days. If appealed, the DCWDB's decision is final.

## Contract Close Out and Record Retention

The sub-recipient must maintain a closeout contract file that includes an official notice of closeout (specify the last invoice date and payment date); all necessary records and appropriate release of liabilities, records, or payments; and the transfer of financial and customer records.

Records are to be retained for a period of three (3) years from the date of the final expenditure report for that funding period to the awarding agency. Regulations that cover records maintained by contractors or subcontractors can be found at 29 CFR 97.36(i)(10). However, any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records that has been started before the expiration of the three-year period will necessitate retaining the records until completion of the action and resolution of all issues that arise from it. All sub-recipient contracts contain a provision to return participant files to the DCWDB if the contract is not renewed, or the agency goes out of business

## **ALLOWABLE COSTS BY CATEGORY**

Costs shall be limited to those necessary and reasonable for, and directly related to, the proper and efficient operation of services to youth. Costs are allocated to a cost category to the extent that benefits are received by such category. In addition, in any single costs, which are properly chargeable to more than one cost category, shall be prorated among the appropriate cost categories.

### **Administrative**

Costs involved in furnishing allowable administrative activities may be chargeable to the administration cost category. Costs may include any staff salaries, fringe benefits, office supplies, equipment, rent and maintenance of office space, utilities, postage and other reasonable expense associated with the provision of these administrative activities.

Such costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Advertising
- Insurance
- Duplication and Printing
- Administrative activities include, but are not limited to:
  - Dissemination of program activity information
  - Coordination activities (w/agencies)
  - Data collection for program evaluation

## **LINE ITEM BUDGET**

All proposing agencies must submit a detailed line item budget by using the attached budget summary sheets. A detailed breakdown of all costs must be provided and comply with the requirements of all federal and state regulations applicable to federally funded programs. Note: costs shall be limited to those necessary and reasonable for and, directly related to, the proper and efficient operation of study. The budget must follow the requirements and format identified in this RFP. No handwritten submissions will be accepted.

**PROPOSAL SUMMARY COVER SHEET**

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Program Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Funds Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENCY STATUS:** *(Check all that apply)*

Not-For-Profit \_\_\_\_\_ For-Profit \_\_\_\_\_ Corporation \_\_\_\_\_ Partnership \_\_\_\_\_

Proprietorship \_\_\_\_\_ Public Education Agency \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Private Licensed School by Pa. Department of Education \_\_\_\_\_ Community- Based Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years in Operation: \_\_\_\_\_ Federal I.D. # \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years operating the same or similar Workforce Development program being proposed: \_\_\_\_\_

Provide contact information for other workforce Development areas and/or administrative entities you have provided youth program services to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***In compliance with this RFP format, and subject to the conditions thereof, the undersigned offers to furnish the services requested and certifies he/she has read, understands, and agrees to all terms, conditions, and requirements of this proposal and is authorized to contract on behalf of the firm named above.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Contractor (Agency)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name & Title of Authorized Signatory**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Authorized Signatory**

[Federal Funding Chart](#)

Complete the table below for determination of the need of your organization to undergo either an organization-wide or program specific audit. Indicate \$0 if no federal funds have been received or anticipated to be expended in the future. If your organization’s federal funding levels fall within OMB circular guidelines necessitating an audit, it is the responsibility of the proposing entity to have one performed in accordance with the circulars. Include dollar amount and funding source.

Total federal funds your organization received during the period: July 01, 2019~June 30, 2020	\$
Total federal funds, excluding this proposal, your organization anticipates receiving during the period: July 01, 2021~June 30, 2022	\$