



FAMILIES FORWARD WASHINGTON REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC) is seeking an experienced organization for a new contract called Families Forward Washington (FFW); this will be the fifth location in the nation to offer Families Forward. The award of \$477,894 will be allocated to the selected service provider.

FFW will test a new employment focused program for low-income noncustodial parents (participants) who are unable to fully meet their child support obligations. The key objective is to identify effective strategies to improve earnings capacity and financial capability of participants, thereby increasing their ability to support their children. The FFW program will offer occupational skills training and employment services for in-demand occupations to help participants obtain and retain higher paying jobs with potential for advancement. The program will also offer services to help participants manage their finances and debt, as well as services to facilitate their engagement in the program including responsive child support practices.

Background

Families Forward Washington is supported through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) and by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) through a waiver under section 1115(a) of the Social Security Act.

FFW will be evaluated by MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization with over 40 years of experience launching and evaluating programs for low-income people. MDRC has been working with local partner organizations since 2016 to develop FFW. In each site, MDRC is partnering with a child support agency, and, via subcontracts, with providers to offer occupational skills training, sector focused employment support services, and financial capacity building services. While child support agencies will recruit participants and coordinate services, the core services at each site will be provided a local service provider.

In Washington, the Washington State Division of Child Support (DCS) is the lead for the FFW program and is partnering with the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council. FFW will work directly with the following key partners to successfully provide FFW program activities to FFW participants.

- Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council;
- Alternative Solutions, a program of the Division of Child Support;
- Columbia Basin College (CBC); and
- Selected Service Provider

Between approximately September 2018 and December 2020, the FFW project will recruit and provide FFW services to up to 100 participants. All enrollment will begin in November 2018. DCS will work with the service provider to lead recruitment efforts. FFW will:

- Operate in one geographic area of the state: the Tri-Cities region;
- Provide occupational training to low income participants in five in-demand industries at CBC
 - Training for each participant will be less than six months in duration;
 - Occupational training at CBC will be: CDL Truck Driver, Medical Secretary, Basic Machining, Basic Industrial Mechanical Maintenance, Certified Logistics Technician, and Certified Production Technician;
- Provide career counseling for 12 months following enrollment into FFW;
- Provide job placement and retention services for up to 12 months following enrollment into FFW to help participants to gain and sustain employment after training completion;
- Provide referrals to financial capacity-building services (for example, to assist participants with credit repair, budgeting, or other challenges);
- Provide responsive child support services by a designated FFW Support Enforcement Officer through DCS's Alternative Solutions Program.

Scope of Work

Screening and Eligibility Determination

The selected service provider will work with DCS, the BFWDC, MDRC and CBC to implement a screening process to ensure that interested participants meet the eligibility criteria for the study and the specific requirements for entry into the occupational training track of their choice. The service provider will work with CBC to become familiar with the requirements for each training track in FFW. The service provider will work with CBC, DCS and the BFWDC to design an assessment strategy to ensure that participants have the skills necessary to take advantage of training and meet employer requirements to qualify for jobs in the area.

Target Population and Eligibility Determination

FFW will target participants who are unable to fully meet their child support obligations due to low earnings. Eligibility will be limited to participants who, at the time when they enroll in FFW:

- Are 18 to 64 years old;
- Have an actively-charging child support case with Washington State Division of Child Support;
- Are legally allowed to work in the United States;
- Are not receiving or applying to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits;
- Meet income guidelines (earn below \$62,000 per year as an individual);
- Meet training guidelines (details below);

Applicants who meet the above criteria to enter the study will need to meet the eligibility requirements of their chosen occupational training tracks as determined by the training provider. These requirements should reflect industry and employer standards and are meant to ensure that participants can take advantage of the skills training and can qualify for jobs when they complete training. Requirements may include the following:

- Minimum education level;
- Minimum literacy or numeracy levels;
- Work experience;
- Sector specific work readiness skills;
- Capability for physical work;
- Valid driver's license;

The service provider will complete the steps below to screen and enroll FFW participants. See Attachment 1 for a visualization of this process.

- Introduce the study and the trainings offered to participants who are referred and conduct initial screening to assess basic eligibility (e.g. income, age and other requirements) to enter the study and interest in specific training tracks.
- When relevant, have potential participants sign Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Form 14-012 to verify the participant has an active child support case in Washington State with an actively charging order. Individuals will be referred to FFW by community partners, by Search Engine Optimizations (SEOs), or they may self-refer. Interested individuals may also be screened by the service provider, who will ask interested individuals to sign a release form (DSHS Form 14-012) that will allow the service provider to check whether an active child support case exists with DCS. Individuals who pass the initial screening will be invited to attend an orientation.
- Provide an orientation to the study and program. The orientation serves two screening purposes: first, to provide a forum for an explanation of the FFW program, study requirements, and adult education testing; and secondly, to screen for interest in the program. Individuals can end their involvement in FFW after listening to the program description and study requirements. The service provider will conduct orientation events throughout the recruitment period. The location of orientations will be determined by the service provider. Topics and activities should include at minimum:
 - Provide FFW overview that covers goals, basic eligibility criteria, timeline (including program and study activities), data collected, intake steps, and next steps for the candidate (testing, interview, and informed consent and study enrollment).

- Next Steps activities (sign-ups for 1:1 interviews; sign-ups for testing; hand out review guides to allow participants to prepare for assessments; occupational training track flyers to provide more information.)
- Conduct or coordinate assessments to ensure that candidates have sufficient skills to take advantage of the skills training and can meet local employer requirements to qualify for jobs in their chosen section. Assessments may include adult education testing, interviews, and other screening required to enter training and local jobs.
 - Coordinate with CBC to help all interested candidates take the CASAS adult education test, which is required to access CBC workforce courses.
 - Coordinate with CBC to share test scores with candidates and discuss their next steps, including signing up for FFW if they have passed the assessment or attempting the test again if they did not pass the assessment. A passing score to participate in CBC workforce courses is 221; however, CBC will consider cases of each candidate individually.
 - Conduct individual interviews with candidates to ascertain fit with their occupational choice and readiness for employment. Successful candidates will indicate a readiness to enter employment immediately following training, and an understanding and desire to enter their proposed occupation. The interview will also talk about potential barriers to participating in training and gaining employment in their chosen field.
- Using MDRC's online system, complete study enrollment process for every participant. Gather informed consent and authorization to release data, contact information, and baseline data from those who are deemed eligible for services and are interested in participating in the study.
- Enroll FFW participants into specified occupational training at CBC, as best suits each participant.
- Create plan with each FFW participant to start training and other services.

Supportive Employment Services

Career Counseling

Career counseling services for FFW will help participants develop essential skills and strategies to complete their training and succeed in the sectors and occupations of their choice. The service provider will:

- Orient participants to the sector and the occupation by providing information about norms and practices of the industry and the local employers. Topics should include necessary skills, technologies, job responsibilities, work environment, typical work flow, and success factors for the job.
- Help participants set employment-related goals during and after training, including mapping opportunities for career advancement.
- Provide participants with direct feedback on performance in training.
- Help participants address challenges to training attendance, completion and job attainment by referring them to available services in the community.

Job Development and Placement

These services will support both employers (the demand side) and participants (the supply side) to meet employer needs and help participants succeed in livable wage jobs. The service provider will:

- Identify employers who will source job leads/opportunities in excess of the number of participants.
- Understand business needs and refer qualified candidates to employers.
- Engage employer partners to help deliver industry specific job preparation such as mock interviews, workshops, and resume reviews to build relationships and increase their exposure to industry professionals.
- Assess participants' resumes, interview skills, and basic skills to inform appropriate job matches and referrals to employers for job opportunities.
- Help participants refine resume and cover letter documents that are targeted to specific jobs.
- Include mock interview sessions with industry volunteers or prospective employer staff to simulate industry specific job interview styles.

Retention and Advancement

Retention and advancement services will be offered throughout the 12-month period after training is completed the service provider will:

- Offer activities that tie directly to advancement in the industry such as networking events and upskill trainings.
- Help participant to find a new job if necessary.

Data Collection

The service provider will need to collect and store data that will be used for program operations and for research. For research purposes, the service provider will use MDRC's Study Enrollment System to collect:

- Recruitment and screening data, including aggregate data on the number of participants screened for eligibility and the number of participants deemed eligible during each screening step.
- Informed consent and wage data release form signed by applicants.
- Baseline information on applicants' characteristics at time of study enrollment including name, social security number, demographics, educational background, and prior work experience.
- Contact information for all applicants.

In addition, the service provider will collect participation data that includes individual records for scheduled and attended services and classes. In collaboration with MDRC and the BFWDC, the service provider will develop a tracking tool that is sufficiently robust for the FFW project's needs.

Research and Data Collection System Requirements

The service provider will keep individual records of each program group member's participation activities to maintain secure network databases for recording, storing, and extracting electronic data on the participants. To protect the confidentiality and integrity of all personally identifiable information and other sensitive data pertaining to study participants, service provider must follow certain data protection procedures, including, but not limited to:

- Secure on-site collection and storage of data (e.g. locked cabinets for physical records and/or a robust technical environment, secured by firewalls and utilizes tools for virus protection and intrusion detection, that limits access to designated network areas and requires authorized individuals to gain access via password identification systems for electronic records).
- Limit access to data to those with a need to know.
- Secure transmission of electronic and paper records.
- Secure transmission of inquiries or information about specific study participants.
- The service provider may be asked by MDRC to make reasonable changes to these systems to accommodate the research data collection needs. MDRC will work to minimize the burden on the service provider.

Requirements

RFI

All service providers confirming their participation in this RFI should e-mail a Letter of Interest by August 10, 2018 to the attention of:

RFI FFW:

Sonee Kulaga

Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

procurement@bf-wdc.org

RFI Schedule

Request for Information Issuance	7/24/2018
Letter of Interest due	8/10/18
RFI Applications due	8/24/18
Review of RFIs*	Week of 8/27/18
Selection of Service Provider/Notification to Service Providers not Selected	Week of 9/3/2018
Start of contract development and negotiations	Week of 9/10/18
Estimated Contract Start Date	9/17/18

*Please note that the Point of Contact articulated in the RFI application should be available via phone or in person this week should BFWDC have questions.

RFI Related Questions/Submission of Information Process

All questions related to this RFI should be directed to:

Sonee Kulaga
509.734.5980
procurement@bf-wdc.org

Service Providers must ensure that the responses to the RFI are delivered to either the e-mail address above or delivered to the physical address below on or before August 24, 2018, 5:00 p.m. PST.

Physical address:

Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council
815 N Kellogg St, Suite C
Kennewick, WA 99336

RFI Requirements

Please reference each number in your response when addressing all pieces listed below (Organizational Capacity, Assessment and Intake Plan).

Organizational Capacity

1. Please describe the organizations background and experience providing intake, assessment and supportive workforce services as described within.
2. Describe a proposed staffing plan. Please include proposed staffing levels, staff roles and qualifications and the percentage of each person's time that will be allocated to FFW.
3. Attach for each staff position a resume and/or description of the qualifications that will be required.
4. Describe the data tracking systems that will be used to track intake, enrollment and participation data.
5. Please list your main point of contact, title, email and phone number.

Assessment and Intake Plan

1. Describe the proposed approach to providing screening, assessment and enrollment services based on the scope of work described within. Include:
 - a. Location of Orientation Events:
 - b. Name of person (or role) who will lead Orientation Events:
 - c. Length of Orientation Events:
2. Please provide the following information about collecting informed consent:
 - a. Location of enrollment/informed consent:
 - b. Name(s) of staff member (or role) who will conduct enrollment/informed consent:
 - c. Length of time for enrollment/informed consent:

3. Please describe the proposed referral process and enrollment into Columbia Basin College courses.
 - a. How will the service provider facilitate this handoff to increase the likelihood that the participant starts training?
4. What is the overall approach for providing career counseling services? (provide locations of services) For example, include information such as:
 - a. Mode of delivery: one-on-one, group, combination of both etc.
 - b. Mode of communication (e.g. in person meetings, phone calls etc.) and frequency
 - c. How will the career counselor build relationships with participants throughout the program?
 - d. How will FFW staff provide direct feedback on training performance to participants?
 - e. How will they communicate and coordinate with occupational skills trainers at CBC?
 - f. How will FFW staff help participant set and track individualized employment and career goals during and after training?
 - g. How will FFW staff explain sectors and occupations to participant – including industry norms, expectations of local employers, job outlook, and potential advancement pathways?
5. What is the overall approach for providing job development and job placement services? (provide locations of services) For example, include information such as:
 - a. Mode of delivery: one-on-one, group, combination of both etc.;
 - b. Mode of communication (e.g. in person meetings, phone calls etc.) and frequency;
 - c. At what point during the training will referrals to job placements begin?
 - d. How will job development and placement staff coordinate with other FFW staff?
 - e. Describe how job development and placement staff for FFW will identify local employers in the selected sectors, understand their business and labor needs, and engage them to develop job leads and refer candidates.
 - i. How will staff gather and track job leads? What benchmarks will be used?
 - ii. What methods of communication will be used to communicate with employers?
 - iii. How will staff match participants with job openings?
6. What is the overall approach for providing retention and advancement services? (provide locations of services) For example, include information such as:
 - a. How will FFW staff provide services to help participants after placed in jobs?
 - b. How often will staff meet with participants training?
 - c. What methods of communication will be used to communicate with participants' post-training?

Additional Requirements and Documents

The Washington State Institutional Review Board (WSIRB) is tasked with reviewing, approving, and providing oversight to studies that involves human research subjects. Its purpose is to ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of individuals that participate in research. Researchers must obtain approval from an IRB prior to conducting research. Therefore, MDRC is working with the WSIRB to obtain approval from the WSIRB for Families Forward Washington. MDRC is required to submit the details below as a part of their application.

Each staff person who will recruit, screen, and enroll participants will be considered “research staff” by the WSIRB. They will be required to complete the items below.

- **Complete [Appendix A](#)** – contact information form
- **Complete [Appendix N](#)** – conflict of interest form
- **Provide an up to date resume**
- **Complete Collaborative Institution Training Initiative (CITI) training on Human Subjects Research** – The CITI program provides training for researchers on conducting research on people. The training covers the history of human subject protections, ethical issues, and other topics. The training takes approximate six hours to complete. CITI training will be made available through MDRC.

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Washington Relay Service: 711