**Request for Qualifications
for the**

**Learn to Earn Initiative**

**On Behalf of the**

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts’s**

**Interagency Workgroup:**

**Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development**

**Executive Office of Education**

**Executive Office of Health and Human Services**

**Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development**

**Issued by:**

**The Commonwealth Corporation through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund**

**RESPONSES DUE:** October 13, 2017 by Midnight

Upload electronic submission to the following link: <https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/328715>

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**LEARN TO EARN INITIATIVE**

**(WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS TRUST FUND)**

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS**

**Section One: Grant Program Goals & Funding Availability**

1. ***About the Grant Program:*** Commonwealth Corporation seeks qualified partnerships that, upon successful grant award, will work with Commonwealth Corporation for a duration of three (3) months to design or re-design an occupationally-specific training and placement program that will:
* increase participants’ earned income (net of any resulting decrease in public benefits),
* improve participants’ and their families’ economic stability, and
* meet employers’ demand for talent.

Following the three-month program design period each partnership will, upon review and approval of their implementation plan, be awarded funding to implement their program for up to two years.

The Learn to Earn Initiative (LTE), proposed by Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karen Polito and adopted by the Legislature in the FY18 General Appropriations Act, is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs (see Section 1C) with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. LTE Partnerships will develop and test models to serve participants *in the context* *of their family/household*. LTE Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing [benefit cliff effects](https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/communities-and-banking/2017/winter/combining-earnings-with-public-supports-cliff-effects-in-massachusetts.aspx).[[1]](#footnote-1)

The LTE Initiative consists of the following elements:

* Cohort-based, occupationally-specific programs designed and managed by regional industry sector partnerships, including:
	+ Individualized and comprehensive assessment of education and work history, strengths, and barriers to employment
	+ Contextualized, competency-based education and skills training
	+ Contextualized, competency-based work readiness training
	+ Placement in paid or unpaid work experience
	+ Coordinated case management and mentoring to address barriers to employment
	+ Family-focused supports and services, where applicable
	+ Benefits counseling to help navigate public benefit systems and understand impacts of work on receipt of those benefits
	+ Job development and placement services, including post-placement support
* A Learning Community of LTE grantees and key state agency staff to support grantees and share effective practices
* A state-level LTE Interagency Workgroup that will:
	+ Provide professional development to LTE program staff on cliff effects and benefits navigation
	+ Engage with the LTE Learning Community to learn about common issues facing individuals who are receiving public benefits and are attempting to transition to work or increase their income through additional hours of work or higher-level employment
	+ Identify the need for and pursue state-level policy changes regarding public benefits eligibility criteria and income/asset thresholds
	+ Support on-demand, customer-centered problem-solving for individual participants by a state-level representative of each of the identified public benefit programs (specifically child care (DTA authorized vouchers, or Income Eligible child care subsidies), nutrition (SNAP and WIC), income supports (TANF/TAFDC), subsidized housing, and MassHealth)
* Establishment of a “Benefit Innovation Fund” of up to $250,000 to provide support to individual participants and their families as needed to address and mitigate real or perceived benefit cliff issues and benefit coordination issues that they might face, especially as they transition to employment or increased earnings.

This grant program is funded through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) and Learn to Earn Initiative (LTE) line items in the Fiscal Year 2018 State Budget (line items 7002-1075 and 7002-1080). Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Karen Polito created the Learn to Earn initiative in their FY18 Budget proposal, seeking to support individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs in gaining and retaining employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. They directed the Secretaries of Labor and Workforce Development, Education, Health and Human Services and Housing and Economic Development to design the LTE grant program, leveraging the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund regional industry sector partnership model and adding cohort-based coaching, family-focused supports and benefits counseling. This initiative is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD).

1. ***Program Structure and Design Expectations:*** This program is structured in two phases following RFQ submission, including a three-month Program Design Phase and two-year Implementation Phase:

NOTE: During the Program Design Phase, the Interagency Workgroup will incorporate input from selected partnerships to determine how to address public benefit issues, including real or perceived cliff effect issues, through the Benefit Innovation Fund.

Partnerships will have three (3) months to complete program design activities. Commonwealth Corporation will be engaged with partnerships throughout the Program Design Phase. Partnership members must commit to participating in a program design and technical assistance structure. Partnerships should plan for two meetings (in person or via conference call) per month during the Program Design Phase (January 2018 – March 2018):

* one meeting of all funded partnerships facilitated by Commonwealth Corporation in which the funded partnerships will focus on the program design topics for the month
* one meeting between each partnership and Commonwealth Corporation to focus on key challenges or areas that are unique to each partnership’s program design activities

At the start of the Program Design Phase, Commonwealth Corporation will provide a template to be completed for each deliverable stage of the program design. The deliverables will be due bi-weekly based on an agreed upon schedule. The following draft schedule identifies the program elements that each partnership will be expected to design and deliver:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date / Session | Description & Topics |
| Month #1Individual Grantee Meeting #1 | ***Start-Up and Partnership Staffing and Priorities**** Contract & Deliverables Review
* Partnership Start-Up
 |
| Month #1Learning Community Meeting #1 | ***Program Design Structure and Partnership Engagement**** Introductions to CommCorp Staff and Grantees
* Expert presentations on public benefits and best practices in helping participants understand real or perceived cliff effects
* Refinement of Employer Needs, including:
	+ Required skills for the target occupation
	+ Required credentials for the target occupation
* Employer Engagement and Job Placement Strategy
* Understanding how your target population intersects with your target occupation
 |
| Month #2Individual Grantee Meeting #2 | ***Partnership Engagement in Program Design and Supports**** Problem-solve around identified roadblocks
* Understanding the workforce problem you are trying to solve
* Understanding your target population through individualized and comprehensive assessment of education and work history, strengths, and barriers to employment
* Discuss preliminary plans for training design
 |
| Month #2Learning Community Meeting #2 | ***Building a Comprehensive Program Design**** Training Design, including:
	+ Technical skills training
	+ Work readiness training
	+ Basic education, including ABE, GED, ESOL, math, computers/technology contextualized to the industry and occupation(s)
	+ Work experience, including paid or unpaid experiences
	+ Assessment of skill gain
* Coordinated Case Management and Mentoring, including:
	+ Career coaching
	+ Post-placement support
* Family-focused Supports and Services, including:
	+ Benefits counseling
	+ Financial literacy
 |
| Month #3Individual Grantee Meeting #3 | ***Solidifying Your Implementation Plan**** Review draft Recruitment, Assessment and Selection Tool and draft Case Management, Coaching and Participant Support Tool
* Discuss approach to job placement
* Discuss staffing plan and partnership roles and responsibilities
* Problem solve around identified roadblocks and priorities for remaining of design process
 |
| Month #3Learning Community Meeting #3 | ***Refining Recruitment, Assessment, Selection & Your Plan**** Analyze case studies on sourcing & selection strategies
* Revisit job placement with retention in mind
* Presentation on selected topic
 |
| TBDFinal Implementation Plan Submitted | The final version of your Implementation Plan, consisting of program element responses, is due to your program manager by the end of the Program Design Phase. |
| TBD - Anticipated Start Date of Implementation Phase – *funding decisions subject to CommCorp approval of your Implementation Plan* |

Governor Baker established the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) through an Executive Order to create a convening body to align programs and policies across the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Executive Office of Education, and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to support a comprehensive economic growth agenda and workforce strategy to meet employer needs. The WSC has established a common agenda for making public investments that includes supporting initiatives that address the following priorities: demand-driven, leverage partnerships, reflect regional plans, maximize increases in skilled workers, support chronically under and unemployed, leverage other state and federal funding, build on proven programs and sustainability. Through the Program Design Phase, Commonwealth Corporation and the partnerships will design programs that address these priorities.

1. ***Target Population:*** This RFQ is seeking qualifications of partnerships that have experience working with populations facing specific barriers to employment. Applicants should be as specific as possible when describing their target population and their history and competence in working with them.

An applicant’s proposed target population must:

* Be receiving assistance from one or more of the following public benefit programs:
	+ Childcare – Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) child care financial assistance, through Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Authorized Vouchers or the Income Eligible Child Care program
	+ Nutrition – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/WIC
	+ Health Care – MassHealth
	+ Income Supports – TANF/TAFDC
	+ Subsidized housing
* Be unemployed or underemployed individuals
* Be likely to experience or expect to experience repercussions on public benefits, such as “cliff issues,” as a result of an increase in earned income[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Be likely to benefit from a training and placement program that incorporates all of the following elements:
	+ Skills training required for entry-level employment in the target occupation
	+ Knowledge regarding job market/employer recruitment/screening process
	+ Active job development
	+ Incorporation of work readiness skills (i.e. soft skills)
	+ Supportive services (e.g. child care, transportation, housing, wrap-around services, etc.)
	+ Coaching and post-placement support
* Have barriers to gaining and retaining employment or participating in training, including one or more of the following:
	+ Limited educational attainment
	+ Lack of industry-recognized credentials
	+ Lack of English proficiency
	+ Past criminal record
	+ Health problems/ past substance abuse (who have access to services/stabilized)
	+ Disability
	+ Poor Credit
1. ***Target Occupation:*** During the Program Implementation Phase, partnerships will be required to provide cohort-based training, placement, and support services that prepare individuals to meet business’ skill and work-readiness requirements for an in-demand occupation, and better equip them to manage and predict the real or perceived impact of increases in earned income on their benefit levels. An applicant may either propose to train individuals for an occupation in a single industry sector or for an occupation that exists in multiple industry sectors. In either case, the applicant will be required to identify the specific occupation to be targeted and commit to designing or enhancing a training program that prepares individuals for the specific occupation.

We recognize that there are occupations with identical required skills and credentials for entry. Applicants may propose to train individuals for multiple target occupations if the required occupational skills and credentials are the same.

Applications in response to this RFQ must identify a target region and include information about unmet demand for workers for the proposed target occupation. This information must come from regional employers and must include current and projected vacancies and any projected increase in demand for the proposed targeted occupation and skills, as well as credentials required for entry, to demonstrate that the occupation is of critical importance to employers in the region and that there is a need for a training and placement program. Applicants are advised to consult with their local workforce board to gain information about the specific priorities for the seven Workforce Skills Cabinet Teams across the state that were developed through the Regional Planning process.

There is a growing body of research (<http://www.mdrc.org/publication/implementing-workadvance-model>) demonstrating that job seekers benefit from starting at a higher wage and by participating in programs that provide information and coaching on career continuums beyond the first entry-level job. While we have not set a wage floor for proposed occupations, applicants will be required to provide evidence that the programs will place participants in jobs in which the combination of wages, employer-supported benefits and upward mobility pathways are likely to support the goal of reduced reliance on public benefits, increased earned income and economic stability. Such evidence might include:

* the proposed target occupation has attainable opportunity for career advancement and wage progression within a reasonable time frame
* the employer partners invest in supporting entry-level employees’ career advancement
* the employer partners provide sufficient benefits to support a transition from reliance on public benefits in preparing for advancement

1. ***Funding Availability and Structure:*** Up to $1,320,000 is available for this grant program. This amount is separate from the resources set aside for the Benefit Innovation Fund. Commonwealth Corporation anticipates awarding a maximum amount of $330,000 each to up to four (4) partnerships to engage in program design activities and subsequent program implementation. Of this amount, partnerships may request up to $25,000 for program design activities. At the conclusion of the Program Design Phase, each of these partnerships will be required to submit an implementation plan, detailed design, and budget for a training and placement program that will engage and prepare members of the proposed target population for jobs in the proposed target occupation. Upon review and approval of an implementation plan, Commonwealth Corporation intends to award these partnerships funding to implement their training and placement program starting in April 2018. Partnerships will have up to two years to deliver their program. Each partnership’s program design must include a set of services that are necessary for their proposed target population to enter and maintain employment and succeed in their proposed target occupation.
2. ***Outcome Guidance****:* Commonwealth Corporation has established a projected placement rate of 70% of enrollees based on findings from the benchmarking report, “Apples to Apples: Making Data Work for Community-Based Workforce Development Programs” published by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (<http://benchmarking.skilledwork.org/?p=1176>) and Commonwealth Corporation’s experience. Commonwealth Corporation will work with each partnership during the program design phase to determine whether an adjustment to this rate is necessary based on the specific needs of their proposed target population and their proposed target occupation. Additionally, it is the intention of the Interagency Working Group to track changes in family income, stability and public benefits use over time. Grantees will be required to assist in data collection as-needed related to tracking these changes.
3. ***Cost per Placement:*** During the Program Design Phase, Commonwealth Corporation will work with each partnership to develop an implementation budget.We have established a planned maximum investment target of $15,000 per employment outcome, which includes the number of participants who are placed in an unsubsidized job measured at 30 days retention. The cost per employment outcome is likely to vary across programs depending on the intensiveness of each program, especially relative to the planned level of coaching, education and training, job development and job placement activity, including planned investments in subsidized employment. The cost per employment outcome includes all expenses required to obtain an employment outcome, including coaching related to improving financial stability and managing public benefit receipt, recruitment, training, support, program design, and program management. This amount does not include leveraged resources and funds contributed as match. Funds designated for the Program Design Phase will not be included when calculating the cost per outcome.
4. ***Matching Funds:*** Partnerships will be required to provide a 30% match of total awarded funds both during the Program Design and Implementation Phases. Program Design Match may be cash or in-kind and include:
* Staff time to engage in program design
* Rent and associated operating costs not charged to the grant
* Other expenses related to designing a cohort-based coaching, training and placement program
1. ***Allowable Costs:***  Program design funds may be used for reasonable costs associated with the design of a training and placement program for the proposed target population. Implementation funds may be used for reasonable costs associated with the implementation of a cohort-based coaching, training and placement program.
2. ***Payment:*** Funds will be disbursed on a cost reimbursement basis. Lead applicants for each partnership will be required to submit one invoice for the entire Program Design Period using an invoice template supplied by Commonwealth Corporation. Partnerships will only be reimbursed for expenses incurred during the period of the contract. Lead applicants for each partnership will be required to maintain and submit, upon request, back-up documentation for expenses and match contributions.

**Section Two: Eligible Lead Applicants & Partners**

1. ***Required Partnership Qualifications:*** Partnerships must ensure they have all the partners needed to reach and support their target population in securing employment for their target occupation. Each partner must commit to engaging fully in program planning, development, and implementation in order to design or re-design components of a training and placement program. Each partner must demonstrate their commitment to the design and implementation process for the Learn to Earn Initiative. Each partner must also outline their role and anticipated activities. Each partner’s commitments, roles and activities must be provided either through a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among partners or through the submission of separate letters of commitment.
2. ***Eligible Lead Applicants:***The following organizations are eligible to apply as lead applicants on behalf of a partnership:
* Community-based organizations, including adult basic education providers
* Employers with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents in the proposed target occupation
* Employer associations
* Higher education institutions
* Labor organizations
* Local workforce development entities
* Local workforce investment boards
* Nonprofit education, training or other service providers
* One-stop career centers
* Vocational education institutions
1. ***Lead Applicant Qualifications****:* Lead applicants must:
* Convene the partners to achieve the overall project goals, including, but not limited to, coordinating the design of the project, developing an appropriate budget, negotiating agreement of the project performance management measures, and coordinating all activities of the project.
* Have experience with grant management and operational capacity to manage public funds.
* Have a commitment to work collaboratively with Commonwealth Corporation to ensure that the program is designed to meet participants’ needs and achieve planned outcomes.
1. ***Required Partners:***Partnerships must include a minimum of two businesses with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents in the proposed target occupation. Business partners must demonstrate the following through the MOA or letter of commitment:
	* Demonstrated Demand: Vacancies and/or hiring needs for workers in the proposed target occupation and a commitment to a candidate-sourcing strategy that includes recruiting and training members of the proposed target population as a solution to meet this demand
	* Expertise with Technical, Soft Skill and Work Readiness Requirements: Ability to articulate the technical, soft skills, and work readiness requirements for entry-level employment in the proposed target occupation as well as a commitment to provide time to work with partners to design a program that will prepare members of the proposed target population for successful employment in the proposed target occupation

If workers in the proposed target occupation at participating businesses are covered by a collective bargaining agreement, the union that represents the workers must also demonstrate partnership through either a signed Memorandum of Agreement or Letter of Commitment.

1. ***Required Roles:***We seek partnerships that, among the members, demonstrate the expertise and/or resources to be successful. Partnerships must identify and include organizations, in addition to at least two Massachusetts employers, who can fulfil the following roles:

**Participant Recruitment and Support Services**

* Cultural Competence: Expertise in cultural competence and experience working with the proposed target population;
* Strategies for Outreach to the Target Population: Successful outreach and engagement strategies and robust recruitment of the proposed target population;
* Referral Capacity: Ability to refer members of the proposed target population to the program by leveraging relationships with individuals who are receiving public benefits;
* Comprehensive Case Management and Expertise with Financial Coaching, including Accessing Public Benefits and Planning for and Managing Changes in Benefits:
	+ Experience in delivering and/or providing access to comprehensive case management services to individuals/families who face barriers to employment and/or encounter challenges when considering advancement and wage progression due to real or perceived benefit cliff effects;
	+ Expertise in supporting individuals in improving their economic stability *in the context* *of their family/household*, including developing social networks and financial literacy skills and managing public benefits (e.g. housing, childcare, TANF, SNAP, transportation, etc.);

**Work Readiness, Occupational Training, and Job Placement**

* Expertise in Workforce Training: Qualifications and experience in developing and implementing workforce training for the proposed target occupation;
* Expertise in Competency-Based Work Experience: Expertise in structuring competency-based work experience and strong relationships with employers;
* Job Development, Placement, and Retention Services:
	+ Knowledge regarding regional job market, and employer recruitment and screening processes for the proposed target occupation; and
	+ Expertise in job development and placement services, including post-placement supports to promote retained employment.

Examples of such partners include, but are not limited to, local service offices of public agencies, one-stop career centers, workforce development boards, employer associations, labor organizations, institutions of higher education and vocational technical education institutions, and non-profit education, training or other service providers.

**Section Three: Submission Schedule & Instructions for Submission**

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| --- | --- |
| Request for Qualifications Released | August 11, 2017 |
| Deadline to Submit Written Questions | September 29, 2017 |
| All Answers to Written Questions Posted on Website | October 6, 2017 |
| Applications Due | October 13, 2017 |
| Applicants Notified of Status | December 2017 |
| Anticipated Program Design Contract Start Date | January 1, 2018 |
| Anticipated Program Design Phase Period | January 1, 2018 – March 31, 2018  |
| Anticipated Implementation Phase Period | April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2020 |

* 1. ***Clarification Period:*** Questions about the Learn to Earn Initiative Request for Qualifications will be accepted in writing through Friday, September 29, 2017 at 5pm. Please submit these via email to Anthony Britt at abritt@commcorp.org. All questions will be responded to and posted on Commonwealth Corporation’s website at [www.commcorp.org](http://www.commcorp.org) by Friday, October 6, 2017. Applicants can sign up at the following link to receive email notifications when new responses are posted: <https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/328714>. However, all potential applicants are advised to check the Commonwealth Corporation’s website periodically for additional information and updates until submissions are due.
	2. ***Qualifications Submission Instructions:*** Applications are due on Friday, October 13, 2017 by Midnight. Please upload your submission electronically to the following link:

<https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/328715>. In order to upload your submission, you will need to complete a form that provides the following information: (1) the **Name** of the lead applicant organization, (2) the lead applicant organization’s **Federal Employer ID Number**, (3) the lead applicant organization’s **Department of Unemployment Assistance ID Number**, (4) the **Total Program Design Funds Requested**, and (5) the lead applicant organization’s **Primary Contact Person** (to be notified upon decision of grant award).

Applicants should review all components prior to uploading in order to ensure they have completed all of the required information. Narrative forms must be submitted in MS Word file format. Budgets must be submitted in MS Excel file format. Signed MOAs or letters of commitment must be scanned and submitted in the form of a single PDF file. COGS must be submitted in the form of a single PDF file. Should you encounter any submission issues, please contact Anthony Britt at abritt@commcorp.org or 617-717-6909.

* 1. ***Qualifications Submission Package Components:*** The following documents make up the required components of the Qualifications Submission Package. Failure to provide any of the documents or materials listed below may result in the disqualification of the application.
	2. *Project Profile:* Attachment 1 is the Project Profile. Complete each question on the Project Profile. You may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers. Do not delete any of the questions. There is no page limit for Attachment 1, but we ask that you limit responses only to what is necessary to answer each question sufficiently.
	3. *Program Design Narrative Form:* Respond to all questions on the Program Design Narrative Form. Attachment 2 has a four-page limit including charts. We ask that you limit responses only to what is necessary to answer each question sufficiently. You may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers. Do not delete any of the questions.
	4. *Program Design Gap Analysis Chart:* Respond to all questions on the Program Design Gap Analysis Chart. Attachment 3 has no page limit including charts, but we ask that you limit responses only to what is necessary to answer each question sufficiently. You may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers. Do not delete any of the questions.
	5. *Partnership Qualifications Chart:* The Partnership Qualifications Chart asks you to describe *which partner* has the relevant experience or expertise for each required qualification that is listed. *Please refer back to Section 2 for a more detailed list of qualifications.* You should include specific examples of their experience or expertise in the designated area. It is likely that their qualifications will align with their specific role during the Program Design or Implementation Phase. While it is likely that multiple partners may have the required qualifications, we ask that you list at least one but no more than two (2) organizations for each category, and keep in mind that all partnerships are required to include at least two Massachusetts-based businesses. Do not delete any of the questions. Attachment 4 has no page limit and you may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers.
	6. *Memorandum of Agreement or Letter of Commitment:* Each partner must demonstrate their commitment to the design and implementation process for the Learn to Earn Initiative. Each partner must also outline their role and anticipated activities. Each partner’s commitments, roles and activities must be provided either through a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among partners or through the submission of separate letters of commitment. This component pertains to all partners in addition to the required employer partners. See Section 2 for more information about required partner commitments.
	7. *Program Design Phase Budget, Budget Narrative, and Match Contribution Form***:** Attachments 6a, 6b, and 6c are the Program Design Phase Budget, Budget Request Narrative and Match Narrative Forms. These are included as a separate MS Excel Workbook labeled “LTE Program Design Budget Forms.” You must submit a detailed budget request using the provided forms. The budget will also become the financial basis for any grant award, and for making cost reimbursement payments over the course of the three-month Program Design phase. Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to modify application budgets prior to and/or after grant award.
	8. *Certificate of Good Standing:* All lead applicants\* must submit a Certificate of Good Standing from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. This should be included in your Qualifications Submission Package and labeled Attachment 7.**\*Please note that community colleges, public vocational technical high schools, and public state universities serving as the lead applicant do not need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing.**

**Section Four: Submission Evaluation Process & Criteria**

1. ***Proposal Evaluation Process****:* Qualifications submitted in response to this solicitation will be reviewed by Commonwealth Corporation and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, with the participation of other state partners.

 The review process will consist of the following steps:

**Step 1: Threshold Criteria Screening**

Submissions will be screened for completeness, conformity to the program requirements, and timeliness of response. Submissions that are incomplete, non-conforming, or late may not be considered.

**Step 2:** **Compliance Screening**

Commonwealth Corporation will conduct an analysis to ensure all lead applicants are in compliance with state and federal law. Lead applicants are encouraged to review these criteria and ensure they are in compliance prior to submitting an application. Commonwealth Corporation will conduct the following reviews to ensure compliance:

* Ensure applicants are in good standing with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. Commonwealth Corporation will conduct this screening by reviewing the Certificate of Good Standing (C.O.G.S.) submitted in the Qualifications Submission Package. **Please note that community colleges, public vocational technical high schools and public state universities serving as the lead applicant do not need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing.**
* Please follow this guidance when requesting and submitting a Certificate of Good Standing from the Department of Revenue:
	+ The **Certificate of Good Standing from the Department of Revenue** is **NOT** the same and should not be confused with a **Certificate of Incorporation from the Secretary of State**
	+ C.O.G.S. must be less than six months old
	+ Please visit the Department of Revenue’s website:

(<http://www.mass.gov/dor/businesses/programs-and-services/certificate-of-good-standing.html>) for more information about the C.O.G.S. and to complete an online application to obtain a Certificate

* + Applications for a C.O.G.S. can take 4-6 weeks to be processed
* Ensure applicant is in full compliance with all obligations to the Department of Unemployment Assistance, Department of Industrial Accidents, and any other obligations to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Commonwealth Corporation will work with the Department of Unemployment Assistance to conduct this review.

**Step 3: Review Committee**

A review committee will review and score all eligible submissions. Review results will be documented. Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant to ensure that the review committee has a complete understanding of the program concept.

Submissions willbe reviewed and scored based on the following criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Point value** |
| Engagement of businesses with demonstrated demand and commitment to designing a program that will serve as a source of qualified candidates to fill open positions in the proposed target occupation | **25** |
| Demonstrated expertise in cultural competence, comprehensive support services, and experience reaching and engaging with the target population in accordance with the outlined criteria | **25** |
| Qualifications, expertise, and experience in developing and implementing workforce training and placement based on the technical, work-readiness, and soft skills required for entry-level employment in the proposed target occupation | **20** |
| Track record of success and qualifications/capacity of lead applicant with grant management and fiscal coordination | **15** |
| Need for project is clearly and consistently demonstrated and lead applicant articulates how engaging in the three-month Program Design Phase will contribute to stronger outcomes during implementation | **15** |

**Step 4: Notification of Grant Award Status**

All applicants will be notified of their award status by email.

1. ***Additional Evaluation Notes:*** In addition to the scoring system outlined above,Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to consider only submissions that, in our sole judgment, are complete and responsive to the solicitation’s requirements and include all required application components. Additionally, Commonwealth Corporation and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development reserve the right to consider other criteria in making competitive awards among comparably qualified applicants. This includes the right to consider applications that propose to serve specific populations that may meet criteria related to additional funding identified for this initiative following the posting of the RFQ. Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to reject any and all applications, or to accept any and all applications, in whole or in part, if deemed to be in the interest of the Commonwealth Corporation or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to do so. This RFQ does not commit Commonwealth Corporation to award any contracts. Upon submission, all applications become the property of Commonwealth Corporation. Commonwealth Corporation is not responsible for electronic submissions that are not received by Commonwealth Corporation. We reserve the right to use sources of funding other than LTE and WCTF to support proposals submitted in response to this solicitation. If applicants propose to use other funding sources to support the implementation of the proposed program, Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to consult with the other funders to ensure appropriate alignment of resources.
2. ***Appeals:*** Appeals of the funding decision may be filed with J.D. LaRock, President, Commonwealth Corporation, 2 Oliver Street, 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02109. Appeals must be filed within fifteen (15) days of the date of Commonwealth Corporation’s notice to unsuccessful bidders. The President may decide to hold an informal review of the decision, and may decide to grant an appeal, deny an appeal, or modify an award based on information provided during the informal review.
3. ***Audited Financial Statements and Verification of Fiscal Management Capacity****:* All applicants that are selected for an award will be required to submit a copy of the organization’s most recent audited financial statement prior to the execution of a final contract.In addition, prior to the grant award, Commonwealth Corporation staff may review an organization’s fiscal systems and internal controls to verify that the organization has the capacity to manage public grant funds and administer the program.
4. ***Project Terms and Conditions*:** Grantees will be required to abide by Commonwealth Corporation’s Standard Contract Terms and Conditions, which will be provided during contract negotiation. Applicants may review these terms and conditions prior to submitting an application by contacting Anthony Britt at abritt@commcorp.org to request a copy. In addition, all final contracts are subject to negotiation of a final statement of work.

Section Five: Summary of Attachments

The following attachments must be submitted by all applicants:

* Attachment 1: Project Profile
* Attachment 2: Program Design Narrative Form
* Attachment 3: Program Design Gap Analysis Chart
* Attachment 4: Partnership Qualifications Chart
* Attachment 5: Memorandum of Agreement or Letter of Commitment
* Attachment 6a, 6b, and 6c: Program Design Phase Budget, Budget Narrative, and Match Narrative Forms
* Attachment 7: Certificate of Good Standing

Attachment 1: Project Profile

Please complete each question on the Project Profile. You may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers. Do not delete any of the questions. There is no page limit for Attachment 1, but we ask that you limit responses only to what is necessary to answer each question sufficiently. *Please note: This symbol* **^** *identifies information which you will also need to enter on the online submission form (see Section 3B Qualifications Submission Instructions).*

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| --- |
| **Project Profile** |
| **Name of Lead Applicant Organization ^** |  |
| **Applicant Type:** Please select (⌧) the type of organization that represents the lead organization. |
| ❑ Community-Based Organization, including Adult Basic Education Providers❑ Employer❑ Employer Association❑ Higher Education Institution❑ Labor Organization | ❑ Local Workforce Development Entity❑ Local Workforce Investment Board❑ Nonprofit Education, Training, or Other Service Provider❑ One-Stop Career Center❑ Vocational Education Institution |
| **Department of Unemployment Assistance ID Number ^** |  | **Federal Employer ID Number (FEIN) ^** |  |
| **Total Program Design Funds Requested (up to maximum of $25,000) ^** |  |
| **Lead Applicant Contact Information** |
| **Role** | **Name / Title** | **Address** | **Phone** | **Email** |
| **Primary Contact Person ^** (notified upon decision of grant award) |  |  |  |  |
| **Authorized Signatory** (authorized to commit organization) |  |  |  |  |
| **Fiscal Contact**(fiscally responsible for project funds and submitting invoices) |  |  |  |  |
| **Project Manager,** if known (contact over the course of the project) |  |  |  |  |
| **Partnership Members and Contact Information**Please list the organizations and contact information for all required\* and additional partners.*All partners listed below must have submitted an MOA or Letter of Commitment.* |
| **Organization Type** | **Organization Name** | **Address** | **Contact Name / Title** | **Phone / Email** |
| **Employer Partner 1\*** |  |  |  |  |
| **Employer Partner 2\*** |  |  |  |  |
| **Other Relevant Partners…** |  |  |  |  |
| **Example: Local Office of Public Agency** |  |  |  |  |
| **Example: Community Based Organization** |  |  |  |  |
| **Example: Workforce Investment Board** |  |  |  |  |
| **Example: One-Stop Career Center** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Attachment 2: Program Design Narrative Form

Respond to all questions on the Program Design Narrative Form. Attachment 2 has a four-page limit including charts. We ask that you limit responses only to what is necessary to answer each question sufficiently. You may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers. Do not delete any of the questions.

1. ***Past Performance:*** We are interested in funding organizations that have a track record of success and qualifications/capacity with grant management and fiscal coordination of workforce development programs. Please tell us about a recent grant for the same or similar program that the lead applicant was responsible for managing. Within your response, please provide the following:

* name of the funding agency/organization and the source of funds,
* amount of funds,
* period of performance,
* number of participants,
* how you measured the success of your program, and
* specific performance data.

2.***Need for Project:*** Within this section, please describe the need for your proposed program within your region by addressing the following points:

1. What is the geographic area you are proposing to serve?
2. What labor market problem are you seeking to solve?
3. What is currently working well in your program that you can build upon?
4. What is currently not working in your program and how do you propose to address it by engaging with us during the three-month Program Design Phase?
5. Applicants must engage in a discussion with their local workforce investment board about their possible role and are required to provide information about the outcome of the discussion.[[3]](#footnote-3) Please provide a summary of your discussions with them about their potential involvement in this program and how your program aligns with regional planning priorities.

3. ***Target Occupation*:** Within this section, please describe the specific occupation that you plan to target in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section 1D and explain the regional demand for the proposed target occupation by addressing the following points:

1. Which occupation will your program prepare participants for?
2. How did your partnership determine that there are and will be a sufficient number of vacancies in this occupation within your region?
3. Based on your conversations with employers and other evidence, how would you describe the opportunities for advancement within this occupational track?
4. Using the table below, provide evidence that there will be sufficient job vacancies in the target occupation among partner employers when participants are prepared for placement (over the duration of the implementation period: 3/1/2018 – 2/29/2020):

|  |
| --- |
| **Regional Employer Demand Chart**\**You must include your two employer partners below.**You may add rows to the table for additional employers as needed.* |
| **Employer** | **Target Occupation Title** | **Number of Current Vacancies in Occupation** | **Number of Anticipated Job Openings Over Duration of Implementation Period** | **Skills Required for Entry** | **Credentials Required for Entry** | **Average Hourly Wage****At Entry** |
| **Name of Employer 1\*:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Name of Employer 2\*:**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Name of Employer 3:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Name of Employer 4:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Attachment 3: Program Design Gap Analysis Chart

Respond to all questions on the Program Design Gap Analysis Chart. Attachment 3 has no page limit including charts, but we ask that you limit responses only to what is necessary to answer each question sufficiently. You may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers. Do not delete any of the questions.

* + - 1. ***Target Population:*** In addition to people who are receiving assistance from one or more public benefits in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section 1C, is there a more specific sub-set of the Learn to Earn target population that you are proposing to serve? If so, please elaborate below.
			2. ***Program Design Gap Analysis:*** In the following chart, please describe your proposed target population’s characteristics in relation to the requirements of your proposed target occupation by following the steps:
				1. Develop a profile of your proposed target population. Consider the characteristics in the **“Attributes column,”** each of which is relevant to the level and type of preparation or assistance they might need to be able to succeed in a target occupation or to whether they will be eligible to work or interested in the occupation, regardless of the preparation or assistance you might be able to offer. **Complete your responses in “Column 1.”**
				2. List the requirements for and characteristics of your target occupation. **Complete your responses in “Column 2.”**
				3. As you review the resulting list of population characteristics and occupational requirements, ask yourself the following questions:

For which requirements is my population already a good fit?

For which requirements would my population need preparation or assistance?

What is the program intervention or investment that might be necessary?

Could such preparation or assistance be provided in a reasonable timeframe?

* + - * 1. Indicate whether your participants will likely require a program intervention or investment by marking a “Y” (for “Yes”) or “N” (for “No”). **Complete your responses in “Column 3.”**
				2. Indicate whether each potential program intervention or investment area will be priority for redesign or enhancement during the Program Design Phase by marking a “P” (for “Priority”) or “A” (for “Already in Place”). **Complete your responses in “Column 4.”**

| **Attributes** | **1****Population** **Profile?** | **2****Target Occupation Characteristics & Requirements?** | **3****Need for a Program Intervention?****(Y / N)** | **4****Program Design Priority?****(P / A)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Education level*** What is the average level of formal education your population has completed?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **English language proficiency*** Is your population native English speakers or non-native English speakers?
* If non-native, what is their average level of written and spoken English?
* If non-native, what is their native language?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Level of technology proficiency*** Are they computer literate?
* Have they used basic computer programs?
* Do they have access to the internet at home?
* Do they have smart phones?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Literacy/numeracy levels*** What is their grade level ability?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Earnings needs*** Is your population largely responsible for earning a wage only to support themselves or are they responsible for supporting other family members?
* What public benefits do they currently receive (such as cash assistance, housing subsidy, SNAP, child care, or a transportation subsidy)?
* Do they need coaching to improve their or their families’ economic stability?
* If they are unemployed, how urgent is their need to begin working (how soon do they need paid work)?
* What is the average hourly or annual wage they would need to earn to improve their or their families’ economic stability?
* What is the average hourly or annual wage they would need to earn to reduce their need for public benefits?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Likely work schedule availability/need** * Do they have dependent care responsibility?
* Is it sole responsibility or shared with another family member?
* How does that affect their work schedule requirements?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Work history** * Do the members of your population have recent and robust work history?
* If no, how would you describe their work history?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Employment status** * Are the members of your population currently working?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Criminal record*** Are the members of your population likely to have a criminal record?
* If so, do you know anything about the nature of their records?
* For example, are they likely to have had recent convictions?
* Are the convictions likely to have been for violent or non-violent offenses?
 |  |  |  |  |
| **Transportation resources** * Are they likely to have a driver’s license? Are they likely to have reliable transportation?
* Other
 |  |  |  |  |

Attachment 4: Partnership Qualifications Chart

In the following Partnership Qualifications Chart, describe *which partner* has the relevant experience or expertise for each required qualification listed below. Please include specific examples of their experience or expertise in the designated area and cite specific performance data, where available (e.g. job placement outcomes, number of participants, etc.). It is likely that their qualifications will align with their specific role during the Program Design or Implementation Phase. While it is likely that multiple partners may have the required qualifications, please list at least one but no more than two (2) organizations for each category, and keep in mind that all partnerships are required to include at least two Massachusetts-based businesses. Partner organizations may be repeated. Do not delete any of the questions. Attachment 4 has no page limit and you may adjust the spacing in this section to accommodate your answers. *Please refer back to Section 2 for a more detailed list of qualifications.*

| **Required Role Qualifications and Program Partners Chart** |
| --- |
| **Qualification** | **Organization Name** | **Partnership Member Contact Name and Title** | **What Relevant Experience or Expertise Does This****Partner Contribute to the Partnership?** *Please cite specific performance data where available* |
| ***Example:******Robust Outreach Strategies to Engage The Target Population*** | *XYZ Organization* | *John Doe, Program Director* | * *Managed recruitment for Job Ready Program from 2010-2016. This program focused on recipients of TANF*
* *Recruitment efforts resulted in 50 interested candidates and 10 enrolled participants for each cycle of training*
 |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Cultural Competence** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Strategies for Outreach to the Target Population** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Referral Capacity** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Comprehensive Case Management and Expertise with Financial Coaching, including Accessing Public Benefits and Planning for and Managing Changes in Benefits** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Organizational Capacity and Program Design to Support Individuals in the Context of Family / Household Needs** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Expertise with Technical, Soft Skill and Work Readiness Requirements** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Expertise in Workforce Training** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Expertise in Competency-Based****Work Experience** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Job Development, Placement, and Retention Services** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Attachment 5: Memorandum of Agreement or Letter of Commitment

***Memorandum of Agreement or Letter of Commitment*:** Each partner\* must demonstrate their commitment to the design and implementation process for the Learn to Earn Initiative. Each partner must also outline their role and anticipated activities. Each partner’s commitments, roles and activities must be provided either through a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among partners or through the submission of separate letters of commitment. See Section 2 for more information about required partner commitments.

\*Please note: this includes all required partners **AND** additional partners.

Attachment 6a, 6b, 6c: Program Design Phase Budget Form

***Program Design Phase Budget, Budget Narrative, and Match Contribution Form*:** Applicants are required to submit a separate budget form, narrative and match contribution form. Budget amounts must be reasonable and consistent with proposed activities. Applicants must also provide a 30% match of total awarded funds. Refer to Attachment 6a, 6b & 6c: Program Design Phase Budget, Budget Narrative, and Match Contribution Forms in your application package for instructions to complete the budget.

1. ***General Instructions:*** the proposed budget must be submitted using the following attachments provided in MS Excel file format:
	1. Budget Form (Attachment 6a)
	2. Budget Request Narrative Form (Attachment 6b)
	3. Match Contribution Narrative Form (Attachment 6c)
2. ***Budget Form (Attachment 6a):*** serves as a cover sheet to the Budget Request Narrative and Match Contribution Forms. Although it is formatted with formulas, please check all amounts for accuracy prior to submission.
3. ***Budget Request Narrative Form (Attachment 6b):*** outlines all of the project costs for which you are requesting grant funds. This budget should be based upon design phase duration (three months). Each line item amount should have clear and sufficient cost rationale. Applicants must complete the following columns for each line item for which they are requesting funds:

* ***Actual Cost (AC) or Cost Allocation (CA):*** Please identify whether these expenses will be charged based upon actual costs or a cost allocation plan.

Please note: Applicants awarded funding will be required to provide a copy of their cost allocation plan during contract negotiations. If the cost allocation plan does not include sufficient detail or is updated on a monthly or ongoing basis, this updated information must be included along with other required back-up during specified monthly invoices. Any changes to this plan must be submitted to Commonwealth Corporation for the duration of the grant.

* ***Description of use of funds:*** Please include a description to explain how funds will be used.
* ***Calculations:*** To reduce calculation errors, please use these two columns to include the rate and unit of measurement used to calculate each line item. Instructions for specific line items are included below in the Category Instructions. Applicants may include additional detail in the ***description of use of funds*** column to explain any expenses that do not conform to the standard unit of measurement @ rate calculation format.
1. ***Match Contribution Form (Attachment 6c):*** following the same format and process as the Budget Request Narrative Form, the Match Contribution Form outlines all the project costs that will be funded from other sources. Each match line item amount should have clear and sufficient cost rationale.

Please follow the Category Instructions below for completing the Budget Request Narrative and Match Contribution Forms and remember to *check all amounts* for accuracy prior to submission.

**Category Instructions**: Budget Request Narrative Form

A. **Salary & Fringe**

Salary: This category is for project costs related to staff that will be performing project-related functions and will be on the payroll of the lead applicant only.

The budget should include:

* each staff person (name, if known and job title) on a separate line
* actual rates of pay each staff person will receive for compensation in the column labeled “Rate/hour”
* the quantity of hours each staff person will work on this grant in the column labeled “hours”

Grantees may not invoice Commonwealth Corporation for staff roles that are not included on the budget in the contract. Grantees may charge a higher hourly rate than the rates listed in the budget in the contract. However, grantees are responsible for ensuring that the staffing structure outlined in the contract is maintained. Commonwealth Corporation will not approve a modification to add additional funds to staffing in order for the grantee to maintain the staffing structure included in the contract. Therefore, we encourage all grantees to review any significant staff changes with Commonwealth Corporation prior to making the change to ensure an adequate staffing structure is maintained. Applicants should factor in any proposed increases over the grant period into the average hourly rate.

Fringe: This line item is for fringe benefits for internal staff. The budget should include the percentage used to calculate the actual budgeted dollar amount. The budget should also include details about the benefits included in rate and the rate associated with each benefit.

B. **Other Program Costs**

Travel:This category is forlead applicantstaff travel required to achieve the project goals. The budget should include a description indicating the need for the proposed travel, destinations, and mode of travel. The budget should include the mileage rate in the column labeled “rate” and the total number of miles in the column labeled “unit.” Mileage will not be reimbursed beyond the current federally approved rates.

Space Rental**:** This category is for space rental related to project activity. If funds will be allocated on a cost allocation basis, the average monthly cost should be included in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.” If costs will be charged on an actual cost basis the actual monthly cost of rent should be included in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.”

Telephone & Communications**:** This category is for telephone and other communication costs related to project activity. If funds will be allocated on a cost allocation basis, the average monthly cost should be included in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.” If costs will be charged on an actual cost basis the budget should include the actual monthly cost of telephone & communications in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.”

Equipment Rental & Lease**:** This category is for rental or lease of office equipment necessary for implementation of the project. The budget should include a list of items to be leased. If funds will be allocated on a cost allocation basis, the average monthly cost should be included in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.” If costs will be charged on an actual cost basis include the actual monthly cost of equipment rentals in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.”

Equipment Purchase**:** This category is for equipment purchases. The budget should include a list of items to be purchased. The budget should include the cost of the item in the column labeled “rate” and the total number of units that will be purchased in the column labeled “unit.”

Postage & Mailings**:** This category is for postage and mailing related to project activity. The budget should include a description of the use of these funds. If funds will be allocated on a cost allocation basis, the budget should include an average monthly cost in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.” If costs will be charged on an actual cost basis over the duration of the grant, the budget should include the total cost of postage in the column labeled “rate” and fill in a number “1” in the column labeled “unit.”

Publication/Print/Copying**:** This category is for publication, printing and copying related to project activity. The budget should include a description of the use of these funds. If funds will be allocated on a cost allocation basis, include an average monthly cost in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.” If costs will be allocated on an actual cost basis over the duration of the grant, include the total cost of publication, printing and copying in the column labeled “rate” and fill in a number “1” in the column labeled “unit.”

Meeting Expenses**:** This category is for meeting expenses related to project activity. The budget should include a description of the use of these funds. The budget should include a meeting cost rate in the column labeled “rate” and the total number of meetings that will be held over the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.”

Office Supplies & Materials**:** This category is for office supplies related to project activity. The budget should include a description of use of these funds. If funds will be allocated on a cost allocation basis, the budget should include an average monthly cost in the column labeled “rate” and the duration of your grant in the column labeled “unit.” If costs will be charged on an actual cost basis over the duration of the grant, the budget should include the total cost of office supplies & materials in the column labeled “rate” and fill in a number “1” in the column labeled “unit.”

Marketing & Advertising**:** This category is for marketing and advertising related to project activity. The budget should include a description of use of these funds. The budget should include the cost of the advertisement in the column labeled “rate” and the number of times you plan to run the advertisement in the column labeled “unit.”

Training Materials**:** This category is for expenses related to the purchase of training materials related to project activity. The budget should include a description of the training materials. The budget should include the cost per unit of the training materials in the column labeled “rate” and the cost per unit in the column labeled “unit.”

C. **Contracted Services**

Contractors:This category is for expenses related to contracted services, including any contracted services to fulfill required staffing roles. The budget should include a description of the use of funds including the name of the organization or individual that will be contracted to perform this service. The budget should include the hourly rate in the column labeled “rate” and the quantity of hours each task will require in the column labeled “unit.” Each contractor should be listed on a separate line.

D. **Indirect Costs**

This category is for indirect costs. Indirect costs are costs incurred for common or joint objectives that are not easily identifiable to a single grant and benefit multiple programs. Grantees must apply indirect costs through the use of **an approved indirect cost rate or an approved cost allocation plan**. A copy of the cost allocation plan must be supplied during contract negotiations. Any changes to this plan must be submitted to Commonwealth Corporation for the duration of the grant.

Attachment 7: Certificate of Good Standing from the MA Dept. of Revenue

All lead applicants\* must submit a Certificate of Good Standing from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. This should be included in your Qualifications Submission Package and labeled Attachment 7. **\*Please note that community colleges, public vocational technical high schools, and public state universities serving as the lead applicant do not need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing. Organizations in this category should upload a brief document stating this exemption.**

Please follow this guidance when requesting and submitting a Certificate of Good Standing:

* The **Certificate of Good Standing (C.O.G.S.)** is **NOT** the same as and should not be confused with a **Certificate of Incorporation** from the Secretary of State
* C.O.G.S. must be less than six months old
* Please visit the Department of Revenue’s website:

(<http://www.mass.gov/dor/businesses/programs-and-services/certificate-of-good-standing.html>) for more information about the C.O.G.S. and to complete an online application to obtain a Certificate

* Applications for a C.O.G.S. can take 4-6 weeks to be processed
1. “Cliff effects" are experienced by families and individuals who have both earnings and public benefits when the levels of public benefits decline more steeply than earnings increase, resulting in a decrease in total resources (earnings + benefits) at certain key earnings thresholds. For example, every additional dollar of earnings a worker getting SNAP receives, she sees a drop in the amount of SNAP benefits of about 30 cents. Typically, cliff effects are more pronounced for individuals and families who receive more of such supports. This phenomenon can result in work disincentives for advancement as well as for entry-level employment. For more information, see: <https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/communities-and-banking/2017/winter/combining-earnings-with-public-supports-cliff-effects-in-massachusetts.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As context, if the individual is working, it is likely that their family income is no more than $44,000 a year for a family of three (one adult, two children). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Workforce Board staff have substantial knowledge about business demand for workers in their region. They can also identify opportunities to leverage local publicly-funded workforce development system capacity. Many Workforce Development Boards have staff with experience in designing and managing sector strategies initiatives and in convening and facilitating industry sector partnerships. Applicants can access a list of Massachusetts Workforce Investment Boards at the following link:

<http://www.mass.gov/lwd/eolwd/mwib/local-workforce-investment-boards-16.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)