

## CALL FOR IDEAS

### ***Workforce Innovations to Help Un- and Under-Employed Philadelphians Prepare for and Connect to Sustainable, Living Wage Career Pathways***

Release Date: September 23, 2020

**The Department of Commerce is seeking project proposals that identify and accelerate innovative, evidence-informed approaches to supporting un- and under-employed Philadelphians prepare for and connect to sustainable career pathways that pay a living wage.<sup>1</sup> Proposals must be able to be implemented and evaluated for impact over an eight-month period.**

Project proposals must clearly identify how funding will be used to address workforce challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or exacerbated by long-standing racial injustice. Applicants must describe how they will intentionally identify, elevate, and address the specific challenges Black, brown, and other historically disadvantaged Philadelphia residents face when preparing for and entering the workforce.

Applicants can propose a **new program design** or the addition of one or more innovative, evidence-informed component(s) to **an existing workforce program**.

For the purpose of this funding opportunity, “evidence-informed” is defined as using research, data and best practice recommendations to structure the design and evaluation of new and innovative solutions to an existing or emerging workforce challenge. Evidence can include an applicant’s primary data from pilot programs run on a small scale.

Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed innovation(s) will lead to greater outcomes in one or more of the following areas:

- Connection to sustainable, living-wage employment (*highest priority*)
- Completion of job training
- Increased education and/or industry-recognized credentialing
- Development and demonstration of work readiness skills
- Development and demonstration of industry-specific skills
- Increased job retention and/or career pathway progression

Up to a total of \$1 million will be awarded to between two (2) and five (5) project proposals. Awards will range in size from \$200,000 to \$600,000 and proposed budgets will be reviewed carefully to ensure costs align to program design and projected impact.

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<sup>1</sup> See APPENDIX A: Department of Commerce Mission and Recovery Strategy

## Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include public, private, and non-profit organizations with the expertise and capacity to implement, evaluate, and report on the impact of their proposed innovation(s) over an eight-month period. Applicants must be financially stable, in compliance with all state and federal guidelines as a non-profit or for-profit organization, and in tax and regulatory compliance with the City of Philadelphia.

Note: The City of Philadelphia’s participation rate goal is 35 percent for minority-, woman-, or disability-owned businesses (M/W/DSBEs). Applicants are expected to consider this in their proposal with regard to any contractors, subcontractors, and/or vendors required to implement their proposed initiative(s).

## Timeline

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Call for Ideas Released</b>   | <b>September 23, 2020</b>       |
| Optional Virtual Pre-Proposal Information Session<br>(Please email <a href="mailto:Talent.Development@Phila.gov">Talent.Development@Phila.gov</a> to register.)  | <b>October 6, 2020 at 11 am</b> |
| Deadline to submit questions or requests for clarification, in writing to<br><a href="mailto:Talent.Development@Phila.gov">Talent.Development@Phila.gov</a>  | <b>October 8, 2020</b>          |
| Response to final questions posted   | <b>October 12, 2020</b>         |
| Deadline to submit “Intent to Apply” to <a href="mailto:Talent.Development@Phila.gov">Talent.Development@Phila.gov</a><br><i>An MS word version of this document will be sent upon receipt of the “Intent to Apply.”</i> | <b>October 15, 2020 by 3 pm</b> |
| Deadline for Submitting Proposals to <a href="mailto:Talent.Development@Phila.gov">Talent.Development@Phila.gov</a>  | <b>October 28, 2020 by 3 pm</b> |
| <b>Announcement of Awards</b>  | <b>December 4, 2020</b>         |
| Planning Period Begins   | <b>January 1, 2021</b>          |
| Program Start Date   | <b>February 1, 2021</b>         |
| Program End Date   | <b>September 30, 2021</b>       |
| <b>Reporting Schedule</b>  |                                 |
| Interim Report Due   | <b>June 30, 2021</b>            |
| Final Report Due   | <b>October 31, 2021</b>         |

## Application Guidelines

Project proposals must clearly identify how funding will be used to accelerate innovative solutions to workforce challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or exacerbated by long-standing racial injustice. Specifically, Commerce is seeking proposals that accelerate innovative, evidence-informed approaches to helping Philadelphians dislocated from low-wage employment prepare for and connect to sustainable, living wage career pathways.

Innovations should be evidence-informed and can focus on any number of workforce program components, including but not limited to: Employer engagement in program design, job seeker recruitment, creative virtual training, barrier removal, job connection and retention, financial incentives for job seekers and/or employers, additional or adapted training curriculum, staff training and deployment, etc.

For the purpose of this funding opportunity, “evidence-informed” is defined as using research, data, and best practice recommendations to structure the design and evaluation of new and innovative solutions to an existing or emerging workforce challenge. Evidence can include an applicant’s primary data from pilot programs run on a small scale.

Note: Proposals that target the majority of resources on staffing, propose funds be used to scale long-standing programs, or to fill budget shortfalls resulting from COVID-19 will not be considered.

Priority consideration will be given to applicants that fulfill the City’s goals for inclusion of minority-, woman-, or disabled-owned businesses (M/W/DSBEs).

No more than 10 percent of proposal budgets can be dedicated to administrative costs.

The Commerce Department's Workforce Development Division will make final funding decisions based on recommendations from a review committee comprised of individuals representing multiple City departments, economic and workforce development institutions, philanthropy, and the local business community.

### **Submission Instructions**

Proposal narratives (not to exceed 8 pages, single spaced, 12-point font) should be submitted as a single PDF document and include the required Cover Sheet (see APPENDIX C) and a minimum of two (2) Employer Commitment Forms (see APPENDIX D). Appendices do not count toward the page limit. The completed Budget Template (see APPENDIX E) should be submitted as a separate Microsoft Excel document.

Proposals must be submitted via email to [Talent.Development@Phila.gov](mailto:Talent.Development@Phila.gov) by October 28, 2020 by 3 pm. The subject line should read: Call for Ideas: [name of project idea] – submitted by [name of applicant organization].

### **Narrative Components**

#### **Part 1: Summary of Proposed Evidence-Informed Innovation**

Applicants must thoroughly describe the evidence-informed innovation(s) they are proposing to implement, including the intended impact. Proposed innovations must incorporate the following components:

##### **Population of Job Seekers**

Project proposals must engage Philadelphia job seekers who meet the following criteria:

- 18 years of age and older
- Limited education and/or workforce credentials
- Limited or no work experience
- Either:
  - Currently engaged in, or recently separated from, low-wage employment
  - Historically under/unemployed

Priority consideration will be given to proposals that focus recruitment on Black and brown residents, as well as other historically disadvantaged Philadelphians.

##### **Jobs and Industries**

Project proposals must prepare and provide participants the opportunity to compete for specific full-time (35 hours/week minimum) job opportunities that pay a minimum starting wage of \$13.25/hour.

Priority consideration will be given to proposals that connect participants to job opportunities meeting one or more of the following additional criteria:

- Pay a starting wage of \$13.25/hour or more, with a pathway to a living wage for a minimum of one working adult and one child ([see MIT living wage calculator](#))
- Provide opportunities to advance along a career pathway
- Are at low risk of elimination due to automation
- Are projected to grow over the next 3 to 5 years
- Offer paid sick time and access to employer paid health insurance

##### **Employer Engagement**

Project proposals must describe the role employer partners will perform in informing curriculum development, program design, and implementation. Additionally, applicants will be required to submit Employer Commitment Forms (see APPENDIX C) from two or more employers outlining their commitment to considering, interviewing, and/or hiring program graduates for open positions.

## Part 2: Alignment to Quality Standards

Project proposals must demonstrate alignment to a minimum of three (3) of the *Workforce Professional Alliance (WPA)*'s standards of quality.<sup>2</sup> Priority consideration will be given to proposals that align to four (4) or more standards. Quality Standards are as follows:

- Ensures Fit: An organization will utilize an intentional screening process that assesses the applicant's readiness based on motivation, skill set, and ability to persist to completion. Where a fit does not exist, the organization will maintain and leverage a strong referral network.
- Outcome-focused Design: An organization will maintain an outcome-focused design that is informed by evidence-based best practices and clearly articulates training goals and outcomes connected to gainful employment.
- Stakeholder-informed Curriculum: An organization will develop and maintain an industry and employer informed curriculum that meets the needs of its participants and employer partners.
- Career-oriented Skills Development: An organization will ensure that participants connect to immediate job opportunities after training and complete the program with practical skills that increase their chances of employability in a stable, living-wage job.
- Ongoing Support for Mentoring and Training: An organization will create opportunities for practice with coaching and feedback that will occur during and after the completion of training.
- Built-in Feedback Mechanisms and Evaluation: An organization will embed assessment measures that incorporate feedback from all stakeholders, maintaining internal and external evaluation practices that create significant ROI for participants, employers, and funders.

## Part 3: Commitment to Racial Equity

Applicants must articulate their organization's commitment to racial equity, and specifically describe how racial equity will be defined, measured, and achieved through the proposed innovation(s).

## Part 4: Description of Expected Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy

Applicants must clearly explain the rationale and expected impact of their proposed evidence-informed innovation(s). Specifically, proposals must describe how many job seekers will be engaged and how many will achieve the following outcomes:

- Connection to sustainable, living-wage employment (*highest priority*)
- Completion of job training
- Increased education and/or industry-recognized workforce credentialing
- Development and demonstration of work readiness skills
- Development and demonstration of industry-specific skills
- Increased job retention and/or career pathway progression

Applicants must describe the output and outcome metrics they will use to measure impact, including a description of how data will be collected, analyzed, and reported. Strong applicants will further quantify how much additional impact (e.g. individuals trained, placed, etc.) this funding will generate, versus their current scale of impact.

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<sup>2</sup> The WPA is an organized network of local workforce development organizations focused on connecting, advocating for and driving the impact of workforce development service delivery in Philadelphia.

**Part 5: Staff Qualifications**

Applicants must provide the names, titles, and professional qualifications of all staff members essential to the design and delivery of the proposed innovation(s).

**Part 6: Project Timeline**

Applicants must provide a detailed project timeline that includes key activities and milestones between January 1 and October 31, 2021. The timeline should be inclusive of all activities required to achieve the intended impact.

**Part 7: Cost Proposal**

Applicants must provide a detailed cost proposal and completed Budget Template (see APPENDIX E).

The budget must include all costs that will be charged to the Commerce Department for the proposed services required to complete the project, as well as a good faith estimate of leveraged funds required to achieve the proposal's objectives, both secured and pending.

## APPENDIX A: DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE MISSION AND RECOVERY STRATEGY

### Mission

The mission of the Department of Commerce is to ensure that Philadelphia is a globally competitive city to which employers flock, entrepreneurs thrive, and innovation abounds; to recruit and retain a diverse set of businesses; to foster economic opportunities for all Philadelphians in all neighborhoods; and to partner with workforce development programs and local businesses on talent development, ensuring that all Philadelphians can find and retain living-wage jobs.

### Economic Recovery Strategy

The Department of Commerce, alongside Philadelphia Works and PIDC (Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation), is using a four-part framework for economic recovery that focuses our programs and systems to be more inclusive and equitable: *Respond, Restart, Recharge, and Reimagine*.

1. **RESPOND:** Deliver resources to the most vulnerable businesses and communities and maximize opportunities to sustain employment. Provide immediate relief to entrepreneurs and employers in a transparent and efficient way.
2. **RESTART:** Build confidence in the market to drive demand and support businesses seeking to adapt to new conditions. Provide clear, actionable guidance and critical resources to entrepreneurs and employers seeking to re-open.
3. **RECHARGE:** Regain the momentum we lost by positioning entrepreneurs and employers for growth. Identify and develop new opportunities to drive local business demand and build greater resilience among our most vulnerable businesses and communities.
4. **REIMAGINE:** Seize bold opportunities that may have never seemed possible, amplifying our strengths and ensuring equitable growth for the future. Reimagine and reinvent the industries and jobs of the future in ways that increase access and opportunity for all.

### Workforce Development

Commerce's Workforce Development Division is immediately focused (through the "*Restart*" phase) on supporting workers displaced from low-wage jobs in the most impacted industries. This includes a focus on Philadelphians who lack a high school credential, as well as residents with limited digital proficiency, lack of foundational employability skills, and/or those in need of industry-recognized credentials.

Over the medium and long-term ("*Recharge*" and "*Reimagine*" phase), the Workforce Development Division is focused on the development of programmatic and systemic interventions to enhance the local workforce ecosystem's capacity to prepare and connect residents to career pathways in growing industries, and to meet the talent needs of businesses. These interventions will be designed and implemented in partnership with employers and a range of education and workforce development agencies, including Philadelphia Works, PIDC, the School District of Philadelphia, and the Community College of Philadelphia. By aligning strategies and resources, we aim to drive outcomes at the scale required to address poverty and racial injustice, improve economic mobility, and grow the economy.

Across our portfolio of initiatives, the Workforce Development Division is committed to ensuring our work elevates, prioritizes, and serves the needs of Black and brown and other historically disadvantaged Philadelphia residents.

## APPENDIX B: SELECTED RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE PHILADELPHIA ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

*The COVID-19 pandemic has led to skyrocketing unemployment in Philadelphia, disproportionately affecting Black and brown communities. This page presents a selection of research on the pandemic's effect on the Philadelphia economy. Please note that this is a starting point – additional research is strongly encouraged.*

### **Scale and Context:**

Between March 15 and August 1, over 208,000 Philadelphia residents filed initial claims for unemployment compensation.<sup>3</sup>

- Approximately 69% of claimants reported educational attainment below a high school diploma or GED – of those without a high school diploma, just over half self-reported making it to Grade 11.<sup>4</sup>
- There continues to be a 30+ percentage point disparity between Black and white share of claimants.<sup>4</sup>
- Indicators from initial data show the following five industries were most impacted: Hospitality, Leisure, Entertainment; Healthcare; Business Services; Other (Non-Retail / Wholesale); and Other (Retail / Wholesale).<sup>4</sup>
- COVID-related furloughs are turning into layoffs and/or permanent job loss. It is estimated that 42% of pandemic-induced layoffs will result in permanent job loss.<sup>5</sup>

### **Barriers to Employment:**

Residents face several barriers to employment, many of which disproportionately affect workers of color. Example factors include the level of educational attainment, the digital divide, the threat of automation, and more.

- **Educational Attainment:** At 35.7%, the poverty rate for adults with no high school diploma is 10 points higher than the Philadelphia-wide rate.<sup>6</sup>
  - Nationally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that employed people were more likely to hold an active certification or license (25%) than the unemployed (12.5%) or those who were not in the labor force (6%).<sup>7</sup>
- **Digital Divide:** Digital access is increasingly essential for education, health, employment, and more – yet it continues to be inequitable and inaccessible.
  - Within the Philadelphia MSA, adoption rates of broadband differ significantly; the adoption rate is 53% in predominantly Black neighborhoods, compared to 73% in predominantly white neighborhoods.<sup>8</sup>
  - Further, according to a McKinsey Global Institute study, the need for foundational digital skills will grow by as much as 69% by 2030.<sup>9</sup>
- **Automation:** In Philadelphia, 22% of workers (~630K) are in jobs that have a high potential for automation.<sup>3</sup>
  - The average worker is aged 16-29, a demographic that makes up 30% of the workforce.<sup>3</sup>
  - This further impacts workers of color – Black and Hispanic workers are most likely to be affected. 18.2% of occupations held by Black workers and 17.5% of occupations held by Hispanic workers are at a high risk of automation.<sup>10</sup>
  - Occupations with the greatest risk of automation include cashiers; hand laborers and movers; janitors and cleaners; stock clerks and order fillers; bookkeeping, accounting, auditing clerks; and wait staff.

In this context, employers and workforce development organizations have an opportunity to build an equitable path to recovery for all Philadelphia residents. For further resources, consider the [Economy League](#), the [Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia](#), [Philadelphia Works](#), and more.

<sup>3</sup> *Respond, Restart, Recharge, Reimagine.* City of Philadelphia. September 2020.

<sup>4</sup> *Jobless Report – Assessing the Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak and City Closure on Philadelphia's Workforce.* Philadelphia Works. July 2020.

<sup>5</sup> *Inclusive Future of Work. Automation & Covid-19. Overview: Philadelphia.* Accenture. 2020.

<sup>6</sup> *Philadelphia's Poor: Experiences from Below the Poverty Line.* Pew Research. September 2018.

<sup>7</sup> *Labor Force Statistics from Current Population Survey.* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2016.

<sup>8</sup> *Toward Digital Inclusion – Broadband Access in the Third Federal District.* Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. March 2020.

<sup>9</sup> *Automation and the Workforce of the Future.* McKinsey Global Institute. May 2018.

<sup>10</sup> *Automation and Regional Employment in the Third Federal Reserve District.* Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. October 2018.

**APPENDIX C: APPLICANT COVER SHEET**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICANT INFORMATION**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Applicant Organization</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>Mailing Address</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>Website</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>Minority-, Woman-, or Disability-Owned or Led Organization</b>      |  | <i>(if yes, please indicate which)</i> |  |
| <b>Contact Person for the Application (name and title)</b>             |  |  |  |
| <b>Email</b>   |  | <b>Phone</b>                           |  |
| <b>Project Lead (name and title) (if different from grant contact)</b> |  |  |  |
| <b>Email</b>   |  | <b>Phone</b>                           |  |

**GRANT REQUEST INFORMATION**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>  |  |
| <b>What is the total budget for the proposed project?</b>       |  |
| <b>How much are you requesting through this Call for Ideas?</b> |  |

**EMPLOYER PARTNER INFORMATION** *(please add lines as needed)*

| Employer Partner | Industry | Point of Contact | Position Title |
|------------------|----------|------------------|----------------|
|                  |          |                  |                |
|                  |          |                  |                |

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

| CHECK                        | Application Component  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Application Narrative</b> |  |
|                              | Part 1: Summary of Proposed Evidence-Informed Innovation         |
|                              | Part 2: Alignment to Quality Standards                           |
|                              | Part 3: Commitment to Racial Equity                              |
|                              | Part 4: Description of Expected Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy |
|                              | Part 5: Staff Qualifications                                     |
|                              | Part 6: Project Timeline   |
|                              | Part 7: Cost Proposal  |
| <b>Appendices</b>            |  |
|                              | Appendix C: Application Cover Sheet                              |
|                              | Appendix D: Employer Commitment Form (minimum of 2)              |
|                              | Appendix E: Completed Budget Template                            |

**APPENDIX D: EMPLOYER COMMITMENT FORM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYER PARTNER INFORMATION**

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|   |  |  |  |
| <b>Employer*</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>Mailing Address</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>Industry</b>   |  |  |  |
| <b>Website</b>  |  |  |  |
| <b>Minority-, Woman-, or Disability-Owned Business</b>          |  | <i>(if yes, please indicate which)</i> |  |
| <b>Total Number of Employees</b>                                |  | <b>Minimum Hourly Wage</b>             |  |
|   |  |  |  |
| <b>Contact Person for the Proposed Project (name and title)</b> |  |  |  |
| <b>Email</b>  |  | <b>Phone</b>                           |  |
|   |  |  |  |

*\*Note, the Department of Commerce will not contact employers directly as part of the review process.*

**TALENT NEEDS**

Please describe your hiring needs over the next 12-18 months, including the number of projected openings that could be filled by graduates of the proposed program. How could the program help you meet those needs?

**PROJECT SUPPORT**

How will you support implementation of the proposed program? Please check all that apply.

|                          |   |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Inform training curriculum  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Conduct mock interviews with program participants             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Share information on company culture and expectations with program participants | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide career exposure opportunities to program participants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please explain):   |                          |   |

**INTERVIEW AND HIRING COMMITMENT**

Are you committed to interviewing qualified program graduates for open positions? YES or NO  
 Are you committed to hiring qualified program graduates for open positions? YES or NO

**Employer Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX E: BUDGET TEMPLATE**

Budget Template can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/CFI-Budget-Template>