

2014 SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Request for Application

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

3-31-14

I. General Information

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), is issuing a Request for Application (RFA) to promote employment and training opportunities for youth through a summer employment program focusing on work experience, career exploration, job readiness, and personal responsibility.

A. Funding:

1. Grants will be awarded based on the availability of funds and a state appropriation for this program.
2. Grants will be awarded to organizations through a competitive application process outlined in this Request for Application.
3. Costs must be reasonable and necessary and must be clearly explained and justified in the Budget section of this Request for Application.

B. Eligible Respondents: **Eligible applicants must have administrative and fiscal capacity to administer the program according to the Department's requirements and have the capability to be the "EMPLOYER OF RECORD" including the administration of a payroll system for the employed youth starting in the summer of 2014.** Eligible applicants include:

- Community-based organizations throughout Illinois that have received state grant funds and successfully administered a summer youth employment program.
- Eligible organizations that have not received state grant funds (for summer youth programs) that can demonstrate the capacity to run a summer youth employment program in the following counties: Adams, Alexander, Coles, Cook, Crawford, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Kankakee, Macon, Marion, Massac, Peoria, Perry, Pike, Pulaski, Randolph, Saline, Sangamon, St. Clair, Union, Vermilion, Williamson, Winnebago.

C. Eligible Communities: Grant funds must be targeted to communities to address youth unemployment, poverty, and violence in Illinois' most needy communities.

D. Eligible Participants: Eligible participants are defined as youth ages 16-24 who are served under the following programs:

- National School Lunch Program
- Workforce Investment Act
- Food Stamps / SNAP Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Court-involved or at at-risk youth, or
- Family income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
- Youth with Disabilities

E. Submittal Requirements:

NOTICE: APPLICATION DUE DATE HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO APRIL 30, 2014

1. All applications must be sent electronically to DCEO by close of business on **April 25 30, 2014** in order to be considered for funding. Proposals must be submitted to the following email address: 2014SYEP@illinoisworknet.com. Applications received after the submittal date will be considered for funding and reviewed only if funding remains available after review and grant award of timely submittals.

2. All applications must be submitted in the format prescribed by the department. **A template, (Organization Name - 2014 Summer Youth Program Application.doc), is provided to complete the application.** Instructions for completing each section are included at the end of the file. When completed rename the document by replacing "Organization Name" with the name of the applying organization. Proposals not prepared in this format may not be considered for funding.
3. All applicants must be in compliance, or agree to comply, with applicable federal and state laws and related regulations in order to be considered for an award. Standard grant terms and conditions and the RFA can be found at the following link:
<http://www.illinoisworknet.com/SYEP2014>

F. Agency Contact:

Tammy Stone
500 East Monroe Street, 10th floor
Springfield, Illinois 62701
217-557-5549
Tammy.stone@illinois.gov

II. Program Background and Description

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity will administer a grant program that provides eligible youth with age-appropriate job training, life skills, counseling, work-readiness skills and supervised meaningful work experience. This program presents an opportunity to connect youth to the skills that are needed to enter and advance in the workforce. The applicant should determine the targeted population (in-school youth ages 16-21, or out of school youth ages 16-24) that will be served through this grant and design the program in accordance with the information outlined below. This application may also provide funding for organizations administering community gardens projects.

A. Work Experience Projects for In-School Youth (16-21)

Projects targeting in-school youth will provide seasonal work-experience projects that typically last 6-12 weeks. Eligible youth will be placed in age-appropriate, ability-appropriate, and experience-appropriate work sites with identified employers. Under supervision the youth will engage in meaningful work experience linked to one of the sixteen career clusters (see page 5).

B. Work Experience Projects for Out-of School Youth (16-24)

Projects targeting out-of-school youth will provide full-time work-experience projects that typically last for 3-6 months. Eligible youth will be placed in age-appropriate, ability-appropriate, and experience-appropriate work sites with identified employers. Under supervision, the youth will engage in meaningful work experience linked to one of the sixteen career clusters. At the successful conclusion of the work experience, Grantees will be encouraged to work with Local Workforce Investment Areas to provide permanent on-the-job training opportunities that are funded through the federal Workforce Investment Act.

C. Community Gardens for Eligible Youth (16-24)

Project staff will lead youth teams in planning and developing community gardens and distributing the food from these gardens free to organizations that serve low-income populations. Youth will learn sustainable agriculture practices, healthy food preparation and

eating habits, teamwork, responsibility, community service and entrepreneurship, while allowing them to gain new skills and knowledge in food distribution and marketing. A Farmers' Market component may also be incorporated into the project to teach youth about the entrepreneurial aspect of community gardens and promote the gardens sustainability.

Gardening and horticulture education will be provided every day to youth as they are participating in project activities. In addition, more in-depth enrichment opportunities will be delivered by the Grantee, or designee, utilizing curriculum obtained as part of a local degree or certificate program or from another source. Partnerships with educational institutions are encouraged in order to offer degree or certificate program outcomes for youth. Lessons may include outside speakers and tours. Curriculum must include, at a minimum, four educational lessons that would expand student understanding and awareness of local and regional food systems and career opportunities in agriculture and natural resources. Lessons should be designed to minimally address the following:

- Overview of local and regional food systems within larger agriculture and food distribution networks and why they are important in providing fresh and local foods to residents, and all the different roles that are played in producing, aggregating/distributing, processing and providing technical assistance and support in the system;
- Food quality and safety and what is involved in growing high-quality, safe, fresh foods that are safe and secure including some core concepts in plant sciences;
- Agri-Business including the business aspects of producing and distributing foods in efficient ways that can allow people to make a living; and
- Agriculture careers based on the Agriculture and Natural Resources career cluster materials with a focus on local and regional foods.

Successful community garden applicants must agree to meet all program requirements and document how their organization will:

- Sustain the garden after the end of the grant, identifying resources and plans for sustainability in the application.
- Provide a qualified, experienced agricultural professional to assist with the program.
- Provide appropriate land for operating at least one community garden for this growing season.
- Distribute the foods free to organizations serving low-income populations in their communities and through the sale of products to promote sustainability.
- Provide educational enrichment and workforce readiness components to all youth.

E. Required Program Elements for All Projects

All projects funded under this program must provide case management, supportive services, work readiness skills training and career education that is focused on Illinois' targeted industries and careers clusters.

Case Management: Case management services include job assessment, career readiness, job placement, supportive services and necessary follow-up and referral upon completion of the program.

Supportive Services: Supportive services may include transportation assistance, day care expenses, work clothes, tools and supplies, or other items that are required for youth to participate in the program. Applicants must submit documentation on how the youth will be

assessed for supportive services and the internal controls that will ensure the accountability and appropriate expenditure of grant funds.

Work Readiness Training: All projects must provide training on the work readiness skills needed for employment using the Illinois workNet portal www.illinoisworknet.com. Grantees must register each participant in Illinois workNet and administer an on-line pre-test and post-test that will be used to measure the success of the program. The youth participants must show improvement between their pre-assessment evaluation and their post-assessment evaluation, as well as have completed the following activities in Illinois workNet, to be considered as a successful program participant:

- Exploring Careers and Training
- Financial Literacy, including opening a bank account
- Workplace Skills
- Job Search Skills
- Resume Writing
- Applying for a Job
- Interviewing Skills
- Personal responsibility/safety, violence awareness, and prevention

Career Education / Illinois Pathways: Career education includes training that expands the student's understanding and awareness of career clusters and pathways. Competitive projects will be tied to the courses, work-based learning activities, and credentials/assessments outlined in the Illinois pathways initiative¹. The objective of these strategies is to provide youth with a structured pathway related to their academic or career interests, as well as resources to fully engage students in their learning and enable them to successfully transition into postsecondary education programs and the workforce.

Targeted Industries and Careers: All educational enrichment and work experience projects must be aligned with the career clusters or groups of occupations and industries that have in common a set of foundational knowledge and skills.² There are 16 nationally recognized clusters including:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources;
- Architecture & Construction;
- Arts;
- Audio/Video Technology & Communications;
- Business Management & Administration;
- Education & Training;
- Finance;
- Government & Public Administration;
- Health Science;
- Hospitality & Tourism;
- Human Services;
- Information Technology;
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security;
- Manufacturing; Marketing;

¹ For more information regarding Illinois Pathways, please visit <http://www.illinoispathways.com>

² For more information regarding Illinois' career clusters, please visit <http://www.ilprogramsofstudy.org/>

- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics; and
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics.

General Worksite Guidelines

The employment of youth participants in a youth program must not occur at worksites where:

- A participant's employment would unfavorably impact current employees (a youth participant cannot displace all or a portion of a current employee's hours including overtime, wages, employment benefits, or promotional opportunities);
- A participant's employment would impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- A participant's employment would replace the work of employees who have experienced layoffs; and
- An employer has terminated a regular employee or otherwise reduced its workforce with the intention of replacing said employees with participants subsidized with these funds.

Worksite Agreements

All youth employment opportunities must have a signed worksite agreement.

- Each worksite agreement must contain, at a minimum, the following items for each worksite included in the agreement:
 - Worksite contact and mailing information;
 - Detailed information on the worksite such as location, working days and hours, activities, job titles, job descriptions and number of positions available under each;
 - Worksite supervisor information;
 - A detailed set of mutual terms, conditions, promises, and payments that the grantee and contractor have agreed upon; and
 - A listing of participants for each worksite along with their projected start and end date.
- Grantees must ensure that worksites for youth adhere to current workplace safety guidelines.
- Grantees must ensure that worksites for youth adhere to applicable federal/state wage, labor, and workers compensation laws.

Supervisor Background Checks

All supervisors of youth worksites funded under this program must pass a background check conducted prior to being allowed to supervise any youth.

- Individuals who are not participants but hired as a supervisor must have the background check conducted as a condition of employment into a supervisory role. Background checks are an allowable expense as a condition of employment as a supervisor.
- Participants who are hired into a supervisory position must have a background check conducted prior to being allowed to perform any supervisory activities. Background checks are allowable expenditures so long as the individual receiving the background check is registered as a participant prior to receiving the background check.

III. Proposal and Program Requirements

Proposals are to be completed in the format provided by inserting text into the spaces provided in each section (Word document). Respond to all sections of the proposal. DCEO is seeking projects that: 1) demonstrate administrative and fiscal capacity to serve youth in

multiple communities, 2) have outreach systems to identify eligible youth including the ability to target underserved populations, and 3) have strong established employer relationships and methods to recruit employers.

Successful Summer Youth Employment applicants agree to meet all program requirements including requirements to:

- Have administrative and fiscal capacity to administer the program according to the Department's requirements.
- Have the administrative capacity to assume the role of "EMPLOYER OF RECORD" including the administration of payroll system.
- Have the capacity to assume the role of Employer of Record for the employed youth.
- Conduct outreach to identify eligible youth participants and partner with local organizations for referrals to the program.
- Determine eligibility and obtain all required documentation, and complete a workplace assessment for proper work experience placement.
- All youth must complete a work readiness pre and post assessment through Illinois workNet.
- Provide educational enrichment, work readiness and career education components to all youth.
- Recruit employers for worksites. Qualifying employers will be based on level of supervision and quality of work experience. Work experience is related to the sixteen career clusters.
- Provide supportive services to facilitate a positive attendance record.
- Attendance must be documented through time sheets.
- Provide oversight of the program through the monitoring of worksites and the continuous assessment of program activities and outcomes.
- Provide timely reports as required or requested.

A. Project Schedule:

Project schedules should be based on a start date no earlier than June 1, 2014 and an anticipated end date of September 30, 2014. Projects may begin and end any time during this period based on project design and the availability of youth to participate in the program.

B. Allowable Costs:

Allowable costs are those that are necessary and reasonable based on the activity(ies) contained in the Scope of Work and are justified in the Budget Narrative. Allowable costs are defined below:

- *Youth Wages*: Includes compensation for services rendered limited to youth wages and benefits to include FICA and workers compensation. Youth must be paid a wage rate of \$9 per hour. The length of employment will vary based on the project. **No less than 70% of the total funds** may be budgeted and expended for youth wages.
- *Program Services*: Includes, but is not limited to, the delivery of services related to youth employment that provides direct linkages to academic and occupational learning, employer coordination and recruitment, and youth supportive services that may include transportation, child care, work-related attire, physicals, and background checks.

- *Contractual:* Includes cost incurred via contract or subcontract that are needed for the achievement of project objectives. Organization procurement procedures must be followed on establishing contractual relationships.
- *Other:* Includes direct cost not clearly identified in the other line items. A detailed list of cost and why they are not reported in the other line item is required.
- *Administration:* Includes, but is not limited to, accounting; budgeting; financial and cash management; procurement and purchasing; property management; payroll; and audit costs. **No more than 10% of the total funds** may be budgeted and expended for project administration.

Grantees will be held accountable to all state rules and regulations governing the use of these grant funds.

C. Program Performance Measures, Outcomes & Evaluation:

Performance Measures:

1) Planned vs. Actual Youth Placed in Work Experience:

Grantees success will be evaluated on the number of youth planned to be placed in work experiences verses the actual number of youth placed in work experience.

2) Youth Work Readiness:

Work Readiness is a required measure of youth performance showing an improvement in the youth's readiness for entering the workforce. All youth must take a pre-assessment at the beginning of their work experience and a post-assessment towards the end of their work experience in order to measure improvement in their Work Readiness. Youth must participate in on-line activities related to Job and Career Search; Resume Writing; Interview Skills; and Workplace Skills. The assessments and the activities are standardized and will be conducted on-line through the Illinois workNet website. One of the measures of evaluating the success of your project will be the improvement shown between the pre- and post-assessments making it critical that all youth complete all Work Readiness requirements and show an improvement in scores. It is important that Grantees build in one week to allow participants time to accomplish the pre- and post-assessments and activities. It will be the responsibility of the Grantee to ensure that each youth completes the assessments and activities.

3) Successful Completion of the Summer Youth Program:

Youth are considered to have successfully completed if they have participated in work experience and completed the pre and post assessment tests. Grantees performance will be evaluated on the percent of youth enrolled based on successful completion.

Outcomes:

Grantees will be required to follow-up with youth when they exit the program and determine if they returned to school, were hired on the job, enrolled in a training program, and if they received a certification as a result of the summer youth program. The outcome of the youth must be reported through Illinois workNet website.

Program Evaluation:

Three surveys will be completed to determine program performance. 1) An evaluation will be completed by the employer and will assess the performance of the employed youth. 2) A survey will be completed by the employer and will assess the administration of the Summer Youth Program. 3) A survey will be completed by youth and will assess their experience as participants in the Youth Employment Program.

D. Required Sections of Application -- Read Instructions in the the application document for explanation of requirements for each Section:

Section 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION

Section 2: APPLICANT HISTORY

Section 3: PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Section 4: SCOPE OF WORK

Section 5: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Section 6: PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

Section 7: BUDGET

Section 8: PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Section 9: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

E. Required Attachments:

- Copy of the organization's not-for-profit approval letter
- IRS Taxpayer Identification Number W-9 Form
- Cost Allocation Plan

F. Project Reporting:

Successful applicants will be required to submit regular reports to document the progress and outcomes of the project as part of the grant requirements. Reports include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Weekly Project Updates (as requested)
- Periodic Illinois workNet Reports
- Quarterly and Final DCEO Grantee Report (DGR) and Trial Balance Report
- End of Project Report
- Success Stories

G. Pre-Award Survey:

Applicants are subject to a Pre-Award Survey to be conducted by DCEO Fiscal Monitors. The survey will be completed prior to the grant being issued. The purpose of the review is to establish confidence that the organization has a sound fiscal system established.

H. Monitoring - Fiscal and Programmatic:

Organizations funded through this RFA are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits. The organization must have an open door policy to allow for periodic visits to evaluate the progress of the project. Worksites will be visited as part of the monitoring process, with participants and supervisors interviewed. Organizations are also expected to conduct project monitoring themselves.

IV. Review and Selection Procedures

Grant applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis in three stages as outlined below. The final decision to make a grant award will be made by the DCEO Director.

A. Initial Application Review

All applications will be examined to determine if minimum requirements have been met. If an application fails to meet minimum requirements, it will not proceed to the second “qualitative” review stage. The following are the minimum application requirements:

- The application must be submitted by an eligible applicant.
- The applicant must have substantially followed the application guidelines.

B. Qualitative Evaluation

Applications that meet the minimum requirements will proceed to the qualitative review stage. DCEO will use the criteria listed below when evaluating applications and recommending funding. The Department will consider the applicant’s previous performance in administering grants. The application process may also include interviews and/or site visits at the request of DCEO. The site visit information may be used in developing the final funding recommendation.

Targeted Communities (20% of the Qualitative Evaluation)

DCEO will examine the community and youth participants that will be served by this project. In making this judgment, the DCEO will consider the community need factors listed below:

- Youth unemployment rate in the community
- Community poverty
- Community crime rate
- Characteristics of youth participants including offenders, at-risk youth, disabled youth, out-of-school youth, migrant worker youth, etc.
- Special preference will be given to programs that serve court-involved or at-risk youth

Applicant Information / Capacity (35% of the Qualitative Evaluation)

DCEO will examine if the applicant has the capacity to successfully complete the project tasks within the proposed grant period. Evaluators will consider:

- The related experience of the applicant, sub-contractors, and partners
- The applicant’s previous performance in administering similar projects
- The qualifications of the applicant staff to be assigned to the project
- If the applicant already has a relationship with DCEO whether they are they currently in good standing

Quality of the Workplan (35% of the Qualitative Evaluation)

DCEO will examine the overall quality of the project proposed by the applicant. In making this judgment, the DCEO will consider the factors listed below:

- Well-defined outreach, recruitment, and intake plan utilizing local resources to include recruitment strategy and service to targeted underserved populations;
- Quality of employer relationships and outreach methods to identify and collaborate with employers.
- Ability to assess and make appropriate placement of youth in work sites.
- Quality, detail, and reasonableness of the work plan.
- Ability of the organization in the administration and operation of a community garden project. (Community Gardens Project only)

- Sustainability plan for the garden once the youth have completed their work experience. (Community Garden Project only)

Cost (10% of the Qualitative Evaluation)

DCEO will examine the reasonableness of costs relative to the type of expenses being proposed and the proposed outcomes. DCEO will also consider the amount of match funding provided by the applicant.

- Justifiable and reasonable costs in relation to the proposed activities.
- Partnerships and use of other funds to supplement project funding.

C. Final Review and Selection

The DCEO Director may consider the applicant's qualitative evaluation/funding recommendation, previous performance, site visit report, and the geographic distribution of awards when making the final funding decision. Applicants that are selected for funding will be required to enter into an agreement that outlines the approved grant terms, project scope of work and budget.

DCEO reserves the right to request additional information from applicants during the scoring process if the project or budget information provided is unclear to the review team. DCEO, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to reject all applications; to reject individual applications for failure to meet any requirement, in part or total, and to waive minor defects and non-compliance. DCEO also reserves the right to negotiate continuation grants for projects that were originally competitively procured and performed successfully. Submission of an application confers no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement. All decisions of DCEO are final.