



Employment Readiness Program
 FY 2024-2025 Grant Year
 REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS (RFGA)

Posting Date: July 1, 2024

Your application <u>must</u> be submitted in a <u>sealed</u> package if mailed or in-person delivery. RFGA Number and Deadline/Closing Date (see below) must appear on package exterior.	
Deadline/Closing Date for Applications: July 22 at 2:30 PM EST	Must Be Received At: SCDSS State Office-Procurement Division 1535 Confederate Avenue Ext. Columbia, SC 29201 or dssprocurement@dss.sc.gov No Later Than July 22 at 2:30PM EST
Submit your sealed package to either of the following addresses:	
MAILING ADDRESS: SCDSS State Office-Procurement Division Attn: Yolanda Hudley P.O. Box 1520 Columbia, SC 29202-1520	PHYSICAL ADDRESS: SCDSS State Office-Procurement Division Attn: Yolanda Hudley 1535 Confederate Avenue Ext. Columbia, SC 29201

SCDSS issues this Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) for the funds administered by SCDSS for the State of South Carolina (SC) from the John H Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood grant to fund SC state providers with capacity building training to teens and young adults’ employment readiness. Five (5) grants of \$30,000 each will be awarded through this RFGA. The funding provided in the grant will be used directly toward Works Wonders® model training.

The technical assistance is built for those who work with youth directly and introduces them to five essential career readiness approaches with transitional aged youth; career coaching, employer partnerships, concrete supports, mentorship, and youth leadership. Participants will become familiar with each strategy, understand why it is important, and leaving with starting steps on how they could implement it within their scope of work.

Technical assistance participants will be well-positioned to apply to become Works Wonders® replication partners as the technical assistance offerings align to many of the aspects of the organizational and jurisdictional readiness assessment required to become a replication partner.

Acceptable applications that will be considered as part of this grant program are those that support the activities, goals, and objectives as outlined in the scope of services. Funds may not be used for any other purpose. SCDSS reserves the right to determine whether a proposal falls within the scope of activities and is eligible under the stated guidelines. Applications are only accepted during the Request for Grant Applications period, will be evaluated by a panel of subject matter experts, and will be scored based on the award criteria stated in the RFGA.

Eligibility: The applicant must have a minimum of three (3) years' experience administering transitional age support programs or models in South Carolina through contracts, grants, or other arrangements. The applicant's response to the RFGA must clearly demonstrate an effective approach to serving the targeted population and improve employment readiness outcomes.

How to Apply: See the Request for Grant Applications (RFGA), starting on page four of this document, for additional details regarding information to be included with your submission. A cover letter should be included and signed by authorized agent or other official agency personnel with the ability to bind the agency with carrying out grant efforts. Eligible applicants must submit the required documents to either the mailing address or physical address listed above.

Deadline: The deadline for all applications is July 22, 2024, by 2:30 P.M. EST. Applications must be delivered in paper format or by electronic mail at dssprocurement@dss.sc.gov . Please see the physical address instructions, below. Any documents received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Questions & Answers:

Questions will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. EST, July 8, 2024. All questions must be submitted in writing to Yolanda.K.Hudley@dss.sc.gov. Responses will be posted on the SCDSS website by July 15, 2024 -by 5:00 PM EST.

Final selection of the successful applicant is anticipated to be made and notifications released and posted on the SCDSS website <https://dss.sc.gov/> on August 1, 2024. Notice of extension will be posted on this site if more time is required by SCDSS. The Grant Agreement will be effective when signed by both the Provider and SCDSS.

All providers must have a state vendor number to receive reimbursement from SCDSS. To obtain a state vendor number, visit www.procurement.sc.gov and select New Vendor Registration. (To determine if your business is already registered, go to "Vendor Search"). Upon registration, you will be assigned a state vendor number. Providers must keep their vendor information current. If you are already registered, you can update your information by selecting Change Vendor Registration. (Please note that vendor registration does not substitute for any obligation to register with the S.C. Secretary of State or S.C. Department of Revenue. You can register with both agencies at <http://www.scbos.com/default.htm>.)

Additional Physical Address Information:

Visitors arriving at 1535 Confederate Avenue, Columbia, SC will enter SCDSS through the front entrance and deliver their proposal to Security Personnel and have the proposal date and time stamped for receipt.

It will take several minutes to obtain building access and have your application date and time stamped. Please allow at least thirty (30) minutes for this process of obtaining building access and getting your application stamped in. The deadline for applications is identified on this Cover Page. Please plan accordingly as deadline times will not be adjusted and proposals will not be accepted after the deadline stated.

1. BACKGROUND

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (“Department”) is South Carolina’s leading child welfare agency. The Department’s charge is to protect the state’s most vulnerable populations; its mission, to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while strengthening families. To fulfill its objective, the Department envisions a system that is trauma-informed, family-centered, strengths-based, culturally responsive, and recognizes that children belong in the least restrictive, most family-like, and trauma informed settings possible, where they can thrive and grow.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services, Transition Services and Support Division, and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood believes that youth should have the opportunities to reach and maintain successful self-sufficiency. The journey to adulthood is a critical transition for youth in foster care. It is a time when young adults learn to take on the primary responsibility for their futures and the accompanying concerns of employment, education, healthcare, transportation, and housing. It is also a time where it is critical to maintain significant relationships with those who will continue to support and encourage them beyond their exit of foster care.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) recently received one time funding to invest in the development and implementation of transitional support services to improve transitional outcomes, strengthen stability and success for teens and older youth with foster care experience. It is through this grant, SCDSS community partners will be able to receive training from the California evidence-based clearinghouse for child welfare Foster Forward The Works Wonders® Workforce Readiness program and explore innovative methods and models, learn how to build networks and partnerships, and align an robust employment readiness service array structure to improve youth and young adults employability in South Carolina.

Works Wonders® promotes increased well-being, career development, employment and education engagement, relational competencies, and self-determination for youth who are currently in (or have aged out of) foster care and/or involved in other systems. Works Wonders® is not designed to simply place youth in jobs but works to help them explore career paths that align to their individual interests and needs while assisting them to build the social competencies that are necessary for positive, productive workplace relationships. The program addresses barriers to employment and educational attainment through community partnerships and leveraged resources. Works Wonders® aims to empower youth to achieve success as they transition into adulthood.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

a. Required Activities

The Grantee awarded under this grant must:

- (a) Use \$20,000 of the grant award for the Works Wonders® model training paid directly to Works Wonders®.
- (b) Complete Part One six (6) session in person delivery overview of basic information about Foster Forward and the youth workforce development expertise gained through the development and implementation of the Works Wonders® model.
Complete the following sessions:
 - i. Journeying Through Youth Employment Data in South Carolina
 - ii. How Foster Care Impacts Career Development
 - iii. What Works in Workforce Development
 - iv. Funding Youth Workforce Development
 - v. National & Local Workforce Trends
 - vi. Building Coalition Around Youth Workforce Development
- (c) Complete Part Two five (5) session in person with virtual option delivery, once a week for five weeks total.
Complete the following sessions:
 - i. The Impact of Adult Supporters
 - ii. The Impact of Peer Support
 - iii. The Impact of Employer Partners
 - iv. The Impact of Concrete Supports
 - v. The Impact of Data
- (d) Submit a final report outlining how contractor will apply learned information from the training and technical assistance (TA) to improve employment outcomes for targeted population that they serve with the following information:
 - i. Actionable strategies to propel progress in key areas, identifying where concentrated efforts are necessary to drive meaningful change
 - ii. Employment readiness workplan for development, growth, alignment, and implementation to build network that will improve employment outcomes for targeted population.

3. GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Contractor must:

- (a) Schedule and finalize service delivery of training with Works Wonders® trainers to begin training within 30 days of grant award date.
- (b) Allow SCDSS on site for site visits and/or audits and make records available for financial, programmatic, quality management and other grant-related visits, as requested by SCDSS.
- (c) Be prepared to provide, upon request by SCDSS, specific documentation of expenditures included on submitted invoices.
- (d) Financial Management: Financial records will be reviewed to ensure compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. The records should provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of financial results. Records must identify the source and application of funds and must be supported by invoices and another source documentation.

- (e) Submit a final report outlining how contractor will apply learned information from the training and TA to improve employment outcomes for targeted population that they serve with the following information:
 - i. Actionable strategies to propel progress in key areas, identifying where concentrated efforts are necessary to drive meaningful change
Employment readiness workplan for development, growth, alignment, and implementation to build network that will improve employment outcomes for targeted population.

4. FUNDING RELATED GRANT REQUIREMENTS

- (a) The full amount of the award must be expended by December 31, 2024.
- (b) The selected Grantee must provide a 5% in-kind match.

5. GRANT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The successful applicant will provide programmatic and financial reports as required by the Transition Services and Support Division. These requirements are:

- (a) Monthly Report due by the 15th of the following month: the monthly report will contain the following:
 - iii. Status on completion of identified phases of the grant sequencing
 - iv. Number of trainings completed (including TA sessions)
 - v. High level description of employment focus collaboration

The successful applicant must, upon request, be able to provide other data metrics, as the program/grant progresses, and will be required to provide that information, upon request.

6. GRANT BUDGET

The grant project period is from the effective date of the grant agreement up to December 31, 2024. The total dollar amount available is \$30,000. Determination of award will be based on the merits of the proposed projects as put forth in the grant applications.

7. INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS TO SUBMIT/EVALUATION

To be considered for award your proposal must include, at minimum, responses to the information requested in this section. The maximum points allotted for each section are noted in parentheses.

Proposals are limited to 20 pages for the narrative. The cover page, budget, budget narrative, resumes, appendices, and attachments are not counted against this 20-page limit. Do not include attachment unless requested as they will not be evaluated as a part of your offer. Format your proposals with 1-inch margins, 12-point font, and sequentially numbered pages. Single spacing is permissible.

Proposals will be rated on a 100-point scale (Program Description points available = 40, work plan narrative points available = 40; financial/budget points available = 20). You should restate each of the items listed below and provide your response beneath each item.

ALL INFORMATION SHOULD BE PRESENTED IN THE LISTED ORDER:

TABLE OF CONTENTS – Provide a one-page table of contents document that includes all the items listed below.

8.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (40 POINTS TOTAL)

- (a) Describe the history of the organization within the community and provide evidence that it has the capacity to serve and reach the target population.
- (b) Describe the organization’s ability to meet the training requirements of the Works Wonders® program .
- (c) Describe the level of readiness of based on organization’s current resources and resources needed to explore innovative methods and models, learn how to build networks and partnerships, and align an robust employment readiness service array structure to improve youth and young adults employability in South Carolina.

8.2 WORK PLAN NARRATIVE (40 POINTS TOTAL)

The applicant must demonstrate a proven ability to accomplish the tasks set forth in the Scope of Work.

- (a) Align with SCDSS Guiding Principles and Standards Practice Model: Family centered, Trauma responsive, individualized and strength based, and culturally responsive. Please refer to (See Attachment: SCDSS GPS Practice Model Booklet 37556 [Jan 21]).
- (b) Describe the target population and how the applicant seeks to identify an approach to engage and partner with teens and young adults utilizing adolescent and emerging adult development, the impact of trauma, and methods/strategies to support young person’s capacity to thrive. Ensure recognition and respect of their autonomy as individuals to make decisions about their lives. Monitor growth and change, while delivering equity, inclusion, and empowerment.
- (c) Describe the agency’s collaboration with existing service providers, community stakeholders, and the child welfare agency. Describe strategies to promote a cohesive relationship between local, regional, state employment focused organizations and initiatives and the Department of Social Services staff.
- (d) Applicants must provide a clear, concise, and well-supported statement identifying the service development needs and barriers in the community and how the provider will work collaboratively to build and enhance necessary structures, supports, and services to improve employment outcomes for targeted population.
- (e) Applicants must provide a clear, concise, and well-supported plan of sustainability of applied knowledge once the initial funding provided from the grant for training, consultation, and technical assistance has been utilized.

8.3 REPORTING, BUDGET NARRATIVE, AND EVALUATION (20 POINTS TOTAL)

- (a) Describe how your organization will approach continuous quality improvement.
- (b) Describe your organization’s budget template for the use of grant funds in narrative format and include a detailed itemized budget.

9. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicant shall submit a signed Cover Page and Application addressing all of the above noted points. Application must include one (1) original and three (3) copies of:

- (a) Signed Cover Letter
- (b) Table of Contents
- (c) Program Description
- (d) Work Plan Narrative
- (e) Reporting, Budget Narrative, and Evaluation

ATTACHMENT 1

Procedures for Dispute Resolution

I. DISPUTE PROCEDURES FOR GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATIONS DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The following dispute procedures are available to any community-based organization, local or county program or any other applicant that objects to any requirement(s) as outlined in a Request for Grant Applications (RFGA), amendment to RFGA or does not receive a distribution of funding as a grantee under a federal, state, or combined federal/state grant program. An applicant or grantee that disagrees with any element of the grant requirements or with the distribution of funding is also referred to herein as a “requestor.”

A. Request or Application for Funding. Subject to conditions set forth in these procedures, any prospective applicant desiring to file a dispute concerning DSS’s proposed evaluation of applications or proposed manner of distribution of funds (as outlined in the RFGA) shall e-mail or fax a Notification of Appeal to the SCDSS Procurement Manager within three (3) business days of the posting date of the RFGA or any amendment thereto. The notification of appeal must clearly specify the grounds of the dispute and the relief requested. Within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of a notification of appeal, the Procurement Manager shall render a decision as to the disposition of the dispute and will e-mail or fax written notification of this decision to the prospective applicant. If the prospective applicant is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the Procurement Manager, the applicant shall e-mail, or fax written notification to the DSS Program Area Director* within two (2) business day of the date of the written notification of decision from the Procurement Manager. The Procurement Manager will conduct a review and e-mail or fax a written decision to the prospective applicant within three (3) business days. The written decision will be final and may not be further appealed by the requestor.

B. Award to a Provider. A requestor with a dispute regarding the Notification of Award shall e-mail, fax or mail a Notification of Appeal to the Procurement Manager within three (3) business days of the date of posting of the Notification of Award. The notification of appeal must clearly specify the grounds of the dispute and the relief requested. Within seventy-two (72) hours of receipt of a notification of appeal, the Procurement Manager shall render a decision as to the C. of the dispute and will e-mail or fax written notification of this decision to the requestor. If the requestor is not satisfied with the decision rendered by the Procurement Manager, the requestor shall e-mail, or fax written notification to the Program Area Director within three (3) business days of the date of the written response from the Procurement Manager. The Procurement Manager will conduct a review and e-mail or fax a written decision to the requestor within three (3) business days. The written decision will be final and may not be further appealed by the requestor.

C. Notice of Decision. A copy of all correspondence or decisions under this dispute resolution procedure shall be mailed or otherwise furnished immediately to the requestor and any other party intervening.

II. PROCEDURES FOR GRANT DISPUTES OR CONTROVERSIES REGARDING DSS’S EVALUATION OF A GRANTEE’S EXPENDITURES IN THE POST-AWARD PHASE

- A. Applicability. These procedures shall apply to controversies between SCDSS and a grantee when the grantee disagrees with SCDSS’s evaluation of an expenditure by the grantee as “not allowed” under the grant program requirements. These procedures constitute the exclusive means of resolving a controversy between SCDSS and a grantee of an awarded grant.

- B. Grievance. No later than thirty (30) calendar days after receiving notice that the agency’s grant program area has denied an expenditure, a grantee must e- mail, or fax written notice identifying any dispute or controversy to the Procurement Manager. The Procurement Manager will, within thirty (30) calendar days thereafter, review and attempt to informally resolve the dispute or controversy. If the dispute cannot be mutually resolved within that timeframe, a grantee wishing to continue pursuit of the dispute must e-mail or fax written notice of the dispute to the Procurement Manager within five (5) business days following the 30- day review period. The Procurement Manager or his/her designee will, within ten (10) business days of receipt of a written notice of the dispute, meet or hold a conference call with the grantee. Within ten (10) business days after such consultation with the grantee, the Procurement Manager will e-mail or fax the grantee with a written determination as to his/her decision regarding the disposition of the expenditure. The decision of the Procurement Manager will be final and may not be further appealed by the requestor.

<p>Procurement Manager:</p> <p>Yolanda Hudley, Procurement Manager</p> <p>Email: Yolanda.K.Hudley@dss.sc.gov</p> <p>Phone: (803) 898 -7877</p>	<p>Grants Program Manager:</p> <p>Patrice E White, Transition Services and Support Division Director</p> <p>Email: patrice.e.white@dss.sc.gov</p> <p>Phone: (803) 898-2931</p>
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