CALL FOR IDEAS (CFI)
Workforce Innovations to Help Un- and Under-Employed Philadelphians
Prepare for and Connect to Sustainable, Living Wage Career Pathways

Response to Questions and Requests for Clarification
The following questions were asked during the October 6th information session or submitted via email to
Talent.Development@phila.gov on or before October 8th. None of the responses are intended to
supersede information included in the CFI document.

Section I. Programmatic Requirements

1. **What types of creative solutions will be considered? For example, what about a digital solution that could impact all Philadelphia residents?**
   a. The Commerce Department is open to any type of innovative solution that meets the requirements outlined in the CFI. Please see Narrative Part 1 ("Population of Job Seekers") on page 2 for more information.

2. **Can trainees be paid with funds through the CFI?**
   a. Yes.

3. **Do you expect participants to train and work during the 8-month period?**
   a. This is permitted but not required.

4. **Is the Commerce Department looking for a certain scale? Can you (the department) suggest a number of jobs as a good benchmark?**
   a. The CFI does not include a target or recommended number of job seekers to be connected to employment.

5. **Is earning a certificate or credential a required outcome for a proposed innovation?**
   a. Applicants must describe how their proposed innovation(s) will lead to better outcomes. This could include a certificate or credential, but that is not strictly required. Please see Narrative Part 4 ("Description of Expected Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy) on page 4 for additional information.

6. **Are participants expected to be both trained and connected to work within the 10-month period?**
   a. The Commerce Department expects job seekers to complete the proposed training between February and September 2021, making them eligible for confirmed employment opportunities shortly after program completion.

7. **Does this CFI encourage partnerships?**
   a. Employer partnerships are required. Other forms of partnership are encouraged, but not required.

8. **Do entrepreneurship and/or self-employment qualify as acceptable outcomes?**
   a. Yes, as long as participants are able to earn an equivalent of the required hourly wage for full-time work at the end of the 8-month training period.

9. **Is there an existing workforce innovation in our region or elsewhere that applicants might look to as a benchmark?**
   a. The Commerce Department will not specifically highlight or endorse the work of any current workforce development or post-secondary provider.

10. **What are some significant barriers to equitable opportunity?**

a. Applicants should identify the workforce challenge(s) – which could include barriers to equitable opportunity – that they intend to address. The CFI includes Appendix B ("Selected Research on the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Philadelphia Economy and Workforce") that can be used as a starting place to inform applicants' thinking.

11. **Since wages vary across and within individual employer partners, is it acceptable to submit in this proposal local labor market wage scales as validation that the job pays well above $13.25 per hour?**
    a. Yes. An employer's specific wage rate must also be included in the Employer Commitment form.

12. **Is priority given to proposals that allow for paid internships that offer a wage greater than $13.25 per hour?**
    a. The CFI does not require, or explicitly prioritize, a specific wage for paid training, internships, etc.

13. **How explicit a career pathway is the CFI calling for? The employers that hire our graduates are mostly small businesses, so advancement to $25 per hour for our graduates may need to involve a new job/new employer.**
    a. Per the CFI, 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 individuals to jobs that meet one or more of the additional criterial listed on page 3 (see "Jobs and Industries"). It is not expected that all jobs meet all of these criteria.

14. **If an organization currently implements these types of programs, would they not be eligible, or do we need to propose something new?**
    a. This funding opportunity is intended to fund evidenced-informed workforce innovations that lead to improved outcomes for job seekers. Applicants who want to apply funds to existing programs must identify the innovation they will implement to their existing program and how that will increase current impact in a measurable way. Please see Narrative Part 4 ("Description of Expected Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy") for additional information.

Section II. Funding Requirements

1. **Will there be opportunities for next step funding? What are expectations for sustainability?**
   a. This funding opportunity is currently a one-time-only opportunity. It is the hope of the Commerce Department that the outcomes generated will inform the field – including workforce practitioners, employers, HR professionals, policy makers, and funders.

2. **Can the CFI funding cover personnel costs?**
   a. Funding can be used to cover personnel costs, provided personnel costs do not comprise the majority of the proposed budget.

3. **Is this federal pass-through funding?**
   a. No.

4. **Would an add-on service for less than $200,000 be considered for this opportunity?**
   a. No, proposals for less than $200,000 will not be considered for funding.

5. **Can applicants seek partial funding from this grant for a larger program that exceeds $1 million? (E.g. if an organization has a huge program with a budget over $1 million, can they request funding to partially fund that program?)**

a. Yes. In this case, the applicant's budget should include all the expenses required to achieve the projected outcome of the proposed innovation within the larger program. Additionally, the applicant should indicate whether the funding required to achieve the project outcome is pending or secured.

6. **Can funding be used for administration?**
   a. Yes, up to 10% of the program can be used to cover administrative/indirect costs.

7. **If the Commerce Departments likes a proposal, but would like to see some changes, will there be an opportunity to negotiate the proposal?**
   a. Decisions on which proposals to fund will be made based on what is included in the application documents. There may be some negotiations around scale and budget after final decisions have been made on which applicants are selected for funding.

8. **Are there expectation of leveraged or matching funds?**
   a. No, there is no explicit expectation of leveraged or matching funds.

9. **Would the proposed budget need to be allocated entirely to fund the new component, or could a portion support existing costs?**
   a. Funds should be primarily focused on the proposed innovation but can also be used to cover overall program costs.

10. **Could funding be used to scale an existing innovative program?**
    a. The CFI is not intended to fund a long-standing program with consistent outcomes. The CFI will be used to fund an evidence-informed innovation to a new or existing program. As noted in the response to Section I, Question #14 above, innovations to existing programs should lead to increased or improved outcomes.

11. **On page 2, does the term "majority" mean that successful applicants will not propose staff costs equal to "more than 50% of the budget"? Does the staff of a subcontractor "count" as part of this "majority of resources"?**
    a. Proposals that target the majority of resources on staffing (either directly or through a sub-contractor) will not considered.

12. **Can partners and subcontractors charge indirect (administrative) costs over 10% as long as the total indirect cost remains at 10%?**
    a. Yes.

13. **Can the grantee purchase equipment with grant funds?**
    a. Yes.

14. **For equipment that costs above a certain dollar threshold, does it need to be rented instead of purchased?**
    a. There is not a specific threshold for whether equipment costs should be purchased or rented.

15. **Does equipment purchased using grant funds become property of the City at the end of the grant period?**
    a. No.

16. **Can funding support participant wages or stipends for internships / work-based learning opportunities?**
    a. Yes.

17. **What is the contract's payment structure (e.g., cost-reimbursement)?**
    a. Contracts will be structured on a cost-reimbursement basis.

Section III. Application Process and Timeline

1. **How long is the budget period?**
   a. Maximum of 10 months, starting January 1st and ending October 31st, 2021.
2. **How does an applicant submit an "Intent to Apply"?**
   a. By October 15th, prospective applicants must can send an email to Talent.Development@phila.gov indicating their intent to submit an application by the deadline. No other details are required.
3. **Are there restrictions on the number of proposals a single organization may submit?**
   a. No.
4. **Should multiple ideas be submitted in multiple proposals, and can they all win?**
   a. Each proposed innovation requires a separate application. Organizations are eligible to compete for more than one award.
5. **What kind of reporting is required?**
   a. As noted in the CFI, grantees will be required to submit a mid-term and final report. Additionally, grantees may be asked to report on progress towards their intended impact on a more frequent basis. These details will be determined during the contracting phase.
6. **Will the Commerce Department meet with final applicants?**
   a. No.

Section IV. Other Questions

1. **Will the Commerce Department capture and share applicant ideas, via a database or make applications accessible somewhere?**
   a. This has not been determined. That said, applicant proposals will not be shared publicly without permission.
2. **Is the Department of Commerce expecting non-M/W/DSBE applicants to partner with an M/W/DSBE subcontractor(s)? If yes, is there a specific budget % benchmark the Department is seeking?**
   a. This is not expected but it is encouraged if it will contribute to improved outcomes. There is no benchmark % that is expected.
3. **Does evaluation need to be included in the budget?**
   a. Applicants are not expected to employ an outside evaluator. Applicants should explain how they will track and evaluate the outcome metrics they are proposing to achieve.