

**The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services
Employment Training and Work Skills Development Program
Request for Proposals
SFY 2026 & SFY 2027 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027)**

The Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services (ACDJFS or Department), through its administrative agent the Ashland County Board of Commissioners, is pleased to announce the availability of **\$50,000.00** per state fiscal year for implementation of the Ashland County Employment Training and Work Skills Development Program. This RFP is being released for SFY 26 and SFY 27 for a total not to exceed \$100,000.

Introduction:

In the decade of the 1980's, welfare reform became a national concern. In the following decade, many laws, rules and regulations were implemented on the National, State and Local levels to begin the reform. In Ohio, individuals on cash assistance were notified that they would only receive assistance for a limited time of three years and then the assistance would be terminated. The rules and regulations that were implemented required those on cash assistance to seek and obtain employment and be "self-sufficient" prior to the termination of their benefits. Therefore, it became vital for county agencies to assist individuals in overcoming barriers to becoming employable and self-sufficient.

In 1996, at the same time self-sufficiency was being considered at the state and national level, Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services (ACDJFS) personnel were meeting with social service agencies to consider the impact locally. Since then, ACDJFS has funded many projects which assist in the prevention of individuals coming onto the cash assistance rolls. We have now identified a need which still exists to assist individuals with barriers to seeking, obtaining and maintaining employment. It is the intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) to assist individuals in the circumstance described above. It is estimated that a minimum of eighty-five (85) participants will be referred to the provider during this contract year. Should referrals exceed expectations, and the provider is meeting the performance measure in Item II, B & C of the Technical Requirements on page 8, additional funds may be made available. This project will be funded by the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) allocation. All eligibility and placement into the program will be determined by ACDJFS personnel.

The expectation of this request for proposal is that referred participants will be assisted by case managers who assess the barriers confronting them and address those barriers through skill development, work experience and support.

The Ashland County Board of Commissioners and the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services requests proposals from qualified vendors to provide employment training and job skills training for eligible Ashland County participants.

Required Elements:

1. Pre-Employment Assessment (including physical limitation review and review of academic needs)
2. Work Experience Component (including development of worksite options near participants homes to include local non-profit organizations, libraries, townships, municipalities, and other local government agencies, etc.)
3. Classroom Instruction
4. Job Placement Services (to assist participants in finding unsubsidized employment)
5. Job Coaching, Case Management and Mentoring
6. Follow Along Services
7. Job Retention Support Services
8. Transportation of participants and their children to and from daycare, classroom and worksite.
9. Supplies and software needed to complete assignments, curriculum or to provide safety of participants
10. Skill assessment and development
11. Referral services for needed community services
12. Training of participants in communication, interviewing, resume preparation, time management, decision making and budgeting
13. Designated Coordinator and/or case managers of the program who provide supervision of participants through all aspects of programming. Duties include, but are not limited to: transportation of all participants and their children to and from daycare, work sites, and classroom; plan program curriculum; coordinate instructors; keep accurate attendance records; evaluate and report weekly progress of each participant; maintain participants files; conduct assessments and develop individual participant strategies; communicate regularly with ACDJFS staff; teach job skills classes to include job readiness, budgeting, goal setting; provide individual instruction as needed; develop written program policies and rules; communicate and reinforce positive work behaviors with participants; address consequences of poor performance and/or behaviors in work place; provide resume preparation, mock interview experience and job search placement activities; attend state appeal hearings along with ACDJFS staff
14. Provide bi-weekly documentation of attendance
15. Notify ACDJFS staff within 10 days when a participant does not attend or participate as scheduled
16. Work with participants and ACDJFS staff to schedule make-up hours for absences

No funds will be allocated to an individual or group. A successful applicant must have an active federal identification number (including copy of certification), must abide by the Civil Rights standards regarding employment and service practices, and must be able to provide services to those with limited English proficiency. Programs are intended to be geographically limited to Ashland County residents. Administrative agent is the Ashland County Board of Commissioners with funding contracted through the Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services. Awarding of any contract is contingent upon receipt of the allocation of sufficient funds from the State, and as approved within the

state budget. The contract agency will be required to designate a Program Coordinator who will be responsible for all documentation for the contract, including monthly fiscal and program reports. All reports must be signed by the contract agency Director if different than the Program Coordinator.

This Agreement is contingent upon the receipt of federal funds by the Department for the purposes outlined herein. The Department's obligations under this Agreement are expressly conditioned upon the availability of federal funding for the services and programs described in this Agreement. In the event that federal funds are reduced, withdrawn, or otherwise become unavailable to the Department for the purposes of this Agreement, the Contractor hereby releases and forever discharges the Department, Ashland County, and their respective officers, employees, and agents from any and all claims, demands, damages, or causes of action arising from or related to such reduction or withdrawal of funds. The Department shall have the right to terminate this Agreement, effective immediately upon written notice to the Contractor, in the event that federal funds supporting this Agreement are reduced, withdrawn, or become unavailable for any reason. Upon such termination: (a) Neither party shall have any further obligations to the other under this Agreement. (b) Each party shall be fully released and discharged from all duties, responsibilities, and obligations set forth in this Agreement. (c) Neither party shall be entitled to any damages, compensation, or other payment as a result of such termination.

The applicant will be fully responsible for all costs associated with the development and submission of the proposal. The ACDJFS assumes no contractual or financial obligation as a result of the issuance of this RFP, the preparation and submission of an application by an applicant, the evaluation of an accepted application or the selection of finalists.

The ACDJFS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to accept or reject any or all of the items in the proposal, to waive any informality in the proposals received, and to award the contract in whole or in part if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the ACDJFS. During the approval process, the ACDJFS reserves the right to request follow up information or clarifications to the project proposal.

A review committee will select the successful applicant whose project appears to best meet the needs of the program components, based on the evaluation criteria set forth. Evaluation criteria includes experience of proposing organization, program design, program content, evaluation methodology and cost effectiveness. The review committee will screen all proposals for completeness and compliance with the terms and conditions of the RFP. Proposals received after the application deadline will be rejected.

All contracts will be paid on a cost reimbursement basis. The Provider will be reimbursed monthly for actual allowable expenses, which were approved through the Request for Proposal application and after the successful submission of a monthly fiscal report. Reports and fully documented invoices will be due by the 10th of the month following a reporting month/quarter. Participants must attend the initial orientation and receive all initial assessments in order for provider staff time to be billable to this contract. A good faith effort to encourage the participant to complete scheduled hours is expected from the selected provider. Quarterly program reports will be required to document the attainment

of the required participant goals regarding successful completion of the program and job ready status listed in Item II, B & C of the Technical Requirements on page 8 of this RFP. Total budget shall not exceed \$50,000.00 per state fiscal year. Bidders must clearly identify an hourly wage and anticipated number of hours for each employee who will provide service and be billed to this contract. A total of up to ten (10) percent (\$5,000.00) of the total allocation per state fiscal year may be used for administrative personnel expenses. Administrative costs must be based on a percentage of total program funds expended. All administrative costs must be itemized and justified as necessary to the delivery of the program. Allowable costs may include supervision, meetings and reporting. All funds must be spent during the fiscal year in which they are allocated and all services must take place during the fiscal year timeframe. No funds can be rolled over to the next fiscal year without the written authorization of ACDJFS. Contracts will be subject to announced and unannounced monitoring by ACDJFS. Invoices must be submitted monthly to the ACDJFS. Billing and program reporting forms will be provided by ACDJFS.

Financial reports will be due by the 10th of the month following a reporting month. This contract will be reviewed as of 12/31 of each year, and if 34% of the budget for the current state fiscal year has not been paid by that date, the program will be reassessed to see if the contract needs to be amended or terminated. At least one program review will be conducted during the funding cycle. The ACDJFS Supervisor will also conduct periodic file reviews.

The board reserves the right to renegotiate with a successful contractor and extend agreements into the next contract period, not to exceed a total of four years, without soliciting additional competitive proposals. The dates of procurement may change for the purpose of fiscal planning. The financial portion of the contract will be renegotiated annually based upon the contractor's performance, funding availability, program effectiveness, and any mandated program changes.

No start up advances, equipment or hardware purchases are permissible.

An original and three copies of the entire proposal must be sent sealed and received at the Commissioner's Office by **May 15, 2025, by 9:00 a.m.** Send proposal to:

**Employment Training and Work Skills Development Program
Ashland County Commissioners Office
110 Cottage Street
Ashland, Ohio 44805**

A bid bond or certified check, cashier's check or money order on a solvent bank or savings and loan association, payable to the Ashland County Treasurer, in the amount of five (5) % of one fiscal year budget, shall accompany each bid.

No late entries will be accepted. A written notice of award will follow proposal review. Anticipated start date of project is July 1, 2025. Dates of program operation will be July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2027. All questions should be submitted in writing to Kerri Pidgeon,

Supervisor, Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services, 15 W. Fourth Street, Ashland, OH 44805. Email Kerri.Pidgeon@jfs.oho.gov. All responses to questions will be submitted in writing by the Supervisor. All questions and answers will also be posted on the agency website at www.ashlandjfs.org.

Conflict of Interest

By submitting the proposal, you, as a bidder, certify to the best of your knowledge and belief, that there is no conflict of interest (real or apparent) inherent in your bid, or in delivering the plan of work, or in a contract should one be awarded by the Board. A conflict of interest would arise if any individual participating in the preparation of this RFP, proposal review and rating, or award decisions under this process has a financial interest in, or represents your organization, or would be likely to gain financially or personally from the award of the contract to your organization. The same would hold true for any member of the individual's family, the individual's partner, or an organization employing or about to employ, any of the above as a direct result of the successful award of a contract under this RFP to your organization. The Board reserves the right to disqualify a bid should a conflict of interest be discovered during the process. The applicant must include as part of their proposal, policies and procedures they have in place to handle potential conflicts of interest with participants or applicants for service.

Additional Prerequisites for Award of a Contract

Any bidder awarded resources under this RFP will be required, before contract execution, to:

- a.) obtain sufficient general liability insurance and bonding and submit documentation to ACDJFS, and
- b.) submit signed confidentiality agreements as provided by the ACDJFS, and
- c.) submit proof of workers' compensation coverage

Proposal Evaluation and Selection Process

Evaluation and Selection Process

The process to review and evaluate the proposals submitted in response to this RFP will include a thorough review by a team that will be appointed by the ACDJFS Director. The review team will consider all proposals that meet the requirements identified within this RFP. Proposals that do not include all the required sections and attachments may be declared unresponsive and not evaluated. The committee will, upon review of each proposal, evaluate the merit of the programmatic and financial portions of the proposal identified as follows. The Board reserves the right to ensure adequate geographic and demographic coverage of services is available from the resources awarded for contracts. The Board will approve the final selection of the contractor.

Programmatic Evaluation 75% of Total

The Board is seeking one organization that can deliver or coordinate for delivery the full breadth of components identified in the initiatives described in this RFP. The Board reserves the right to negotiate for all selected components of the bid. The programmatic review of each proposal will consider:

Organizational experience/capabilities/qualification 15%

This section will review the organization's prior experience in providing services, expected future performance, experience coordinating a delivery system with multiple management systems, and the level of expertise of the staff within the organization.

Program Design 25%

This portion of the review will evaluate the feasibility of the delivery of the services as described, the flexibility inherent in the design and within the organization, the level of creativity and partnership development, the degree of coordination with other appropriate service providers, and the Board's other initiatives.

Management Plan 15%

The management plan review will consider the organization's internal control system for tracking performance, safeguarding resources and the ability to take corrective action if warranted. This review will consider both management information systems and fiscal controls.

Deliverables and Coordination 20%

The deliverables and planned service coordination will be reviewed as to feasibility based on the design of the program, and the level to which they will address the desired program objective.

Financial Evaluation 25% of the Total

The financial review of each proposal will consider the cost per deliverable and the reasonableness of the budget based on the program design. ACDJFS will perform a cost/price analysis of all proposals received. That analysis will serve as a significant factor in the decision process regarding the selection of a successful bidder.

Cost per deliverables 15%

The review will consider the contractor's total price per type of deliverable, the measure of an outcome for each deliverable, and the per-unit price for each deliverable.

Reasonableness of Budget 10%

This portion of the review will consider the clarity and accuracy of the detailed budget with adequate budget narrative and the amount and sources of any additional resources being committed to support the proposal, including applicable matching resources.

Contractor Selection

The review subcommittee will present final award recommendations to the Board on June 5, 2025, at the regular weekly meeting. The successful bidder will be notified within one week from that date.

Any respondent wishing to dispute the award decision for legal, regulatory or contract violations must file a written appeal to the ACDJFS so that the appeal is received by the ACDJFS within ten (10) calendar days after the announcement of the award. The ACDJFS will review the procurement file and issue a written response within ten (10) working days.

Ashland County may reject all of the bids and advertise for new bids, for any reason and without disclosure of said reason. The failure to make such a disclosure shall not result in accrual of any right, claim, or cause of action by any unsuccessful bidder against Ashland County. All bidders shall be notified of a decision to reject all bids.

The successful bidder must be willing to enter a definitive agreement in a form satisfactory to the Board within thirty (30) days of the award. The award will be subject to compliance with all applicable legal requirements. The agreed upon contract will be signed by the Director of each entity and the Board of Commissioners. Funds will not be available for use until the contract is executed. If such definitive agreement cannot be reached, the Board reserves the right to extend negotiations, begin negotiations with another bidder, or cancel all negotiations.

APPLICATION INFORMATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS ASHLAND COUNTY EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND WORK SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SFY 2026 & SFY 2027

Technical Requirements

- A cover letter detailing the total amount of the request, signed and endorsed by the agency Director must accompany the proposal.
- Applicants must respond to the information requested in the order listed in each section below.
- All bidders must provide (sealed) one original and three copies of their proposal, not stapled or permanently bound.
- Proposals must be typed, on standard size paper with not less than one (1) inch margins using no smaller than 12 pt. typeface.

- Pages must be numbered in the bottom center and assembled in the order described in the Proposal Components section. Proposal narratives are limited to twenty (20) pages.
- Proposals that do not follow the specified format will be considered non-responsive and may be eliminated from consideration.

I. APPLICANT AGENCY INFORMATION:

- A. Organizational status/ accreditation certification (copy of 501 C-3 if applicable)
- B. Table of Organization
- C. Listing of current (active) board members
- D. Most recent financial statement and IRS 990 or independent audit
- E. List current agency evaluation methods and include agency quality assurance practices. Also include agency management plan and internal control system, which will ensure program performance and financial integrity.
- F. Agency billing information: Address, telephone, fax and email
- G. List Project Coordinator name, address, telephone, fax and email address.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

- A. Description of service(s) to be provided and how those services will be delivered.
- B. Program is estimated to serve a minimum of 85 participants per state fiscal year, based on referrals from ACDJFS staff.
- C. Description of how data will be collected, measured and how the following indicators of performance will be achieved:
 - a. Entry into unsubsidized employment
 - b. Retention in unsubsidized employment six (6) months after entry into employment
 - c. Earnings received in unsubsidized employment six (6) months after entry into employment
 - d. Attainment of a recognized credential relating to achievement of educational skills, which may include attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or occupational skills, by participants who enter unsubsidized employment.
 - e. A minimum of 60% of enrolled participants will successfully complete program
 - f. A minimum of 50% of participants will achieve a job ready status and will be placed in employment of at least 30-35 hours per week
 - g. Program must be conducted weekly with a minimum of 20 hours per week (80 hours per month) and maintain a regular schedule. Program must begin daily at 8:00 am and conclude by 4:00 pm with no more than ½ hour lunch break on participant’s own time
- D. Description of assessment tools to be used, including what is being assessed and why the assessment is necessary must be included
- E. Qualification of staff administering the assessment
- F. Qualification of staff administering instruction
- G. Daily attendance for participants must be documented

- H. All designated personnel associated with the project must become familiar with Ohio Works First (OWF) policies and procedures
- I. Program Coordinator will communicate at least weekly with ACDJFS OWF caseworker to review progress and address any barriers or issues surrounding those participants.
- J. Separate participant files must be maintained with assessments, attendance records, progress notes supporting time billed to the program, outcomes and follow-up

III BUDGET:

A separate budget for each state fiscal year must be submitted and must contain the following information:

- A. Include an *itemized* budget summary for each line item and proposed expenditures.
- B. Provide a total budget including other sources of funding, what expenses are to be paid from those funds and their respective amounts.
- C. Include an itemized list of proposed expenditures to be funded through TANF (the following are approved budget line categories- no other categories will be allowed).
 - 1. **Personnel:** Include hourly rate and benefits for each employee and the approximate number of hours that staff will provide service under this contract.
 - 2. **Travel:** (reimbursement rate will be the IRS rate at time of travel or agency reimbursement rate, whichever is less) from vendor's primary location. Travel logs must clearly address "from" and "to" locations and reason for travel. If utilizing public transportation, actual cost must be considered as part of this budget submission.
 - 3. **Office supplies:** Includes consumable materials related to the program such as paper, pens, folders, copier toner and postage. Copier equipment and maintenance costs are not allowable, only supply costs can be reimbursed. No single item purchase over \$300 will be allowed without prior approval.
 - 4. **Program Supplies:** Includes materials or curriculum costs that are directly related to carrying out or delivering the project.
 - 5. **Administrative Costs:** Total funds available for administrative personnel costs by contract agency will be \$5,000.00 of the total program allocation of \$50,000.00 per state fiscal year. Administrative personnel costs are considered program oversight, evaluation conducted by a supervisor, agency planning of the program, meetings and reporting. Administrative personnel costs should be calculated as a separate line item, using hourly rate and benefits times estimated number of hours the administrative staff will work.
- D. Note in-kind contributions anticipated (include fair market value)
- E. All supplies must be procured per TANF rules (form will be given to contractor).

F. Exclusions: start up advances, capital improvements, equipment and hardware expenses, Medicaid eligible services, services directed to pregnant teens, rent of property owned by the contractor or an affiliate of the contractor, and consultants. Supplanting of existing services is strictly prohibited.

***All questions should be directed in writing to Kerri Pidgeon, Supervisor, Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services, 15 W. Fourth St., Ashland, Ohio 44805 by May 9th, 2025. Email Kerri.Schaub@jfs.ohio.gov .**

Component Check List

- _____ Cover letter signed by agency Director
- _____ Signed collaboration agreements/sub-contracts
- _____ Signed location agreements
- _____ One original and three copies