

Request for Proposals (RFP): WIOA Title I Youth Services for Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The WIOA Title I Youth Services program represents a critical strategic investment in the regional economic health of Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben counties. By proactively addressing the multifaceted needs of disadvantaged youth, this initiative serves as the primary mechanism for developing a resilient, local human capital pipeline. This RFP seeks an innovative, pro-active partner to bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that the region's youth—particularly those historically disconnected from the labor market—are prepared to meet the evolving demands of regional industry while achieving long-term personal and economic self-sufficiency.

The core mission of the Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben Workforce Development Board (CSS WDB) is to cultivate a comprehensive network that addresses the academic, occupational, and social needs of eligible WIOA Title I youth, with primary emphasis on disadvantaged Out-of-School Youth (OSY), ages 16–24, consistent with WIOA's requirement that local areas prioritize OSY expenditures. The selected provider must demonstrate the capacity to manage a high-impact service system that prioritizes objective assessment, Individual Service Strategy (ISS) development, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, leadership development, and unsubsidized employment or postsecondary transition outcomes. To meet federal mandates and regional needs, CSS WDB establishes a 100% OSY enrollment target for all new participants. However, the Board acknowledges the complexity of the regional landscape; consequently, a specific written exemption for In-School Youth (ISY) may be requested from the CSS WFNY Executive Director under exceptional circumstances and must be supported by eligibility documentation, service need, and alignment with WIOA and NYSDOL Youth Services guidance.

Furthermore, the selected provider is required to maintain a consistent active caseload of at least 45 enrollees. This mandate is not merely a quantitative target but a strategic necessity to ensure adequate rural outreach across the diverse geographies of Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben counties. By concentrating resources on a minimum of 45 high-need individuals, the CSS WDB ensures a robust presence that stabilizes the regional economy by targeting those most at risk of long-term unemployment. It is expected that staffing at the Elmira Center will be a minimum of 40 hours per week; Hornell and Bath Centers will each be 8 hours per week; Corning 8 hours per week; and Montour Falls 16 hours per week.

This strategic focus on the disconnected youth population ensures that federal investments yield the highest possible return. To facilitate this vital work, the procurement process adheres to a rigorous administrative timeline to ensure service continuity and operational readiness.

2. 2026 RFP PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

A transparent and rigorous procurement timeline is fundamental to maintaining federal compliance and ensuring a seamless transition of services. Adherence to these milestones is essential to prevent service disruptions for vulnerable participants and to allow the selected provider sufficient time to align their organizational infrastructure with CSS WDB performance standards.

RFP Procurement Milestones	Date/Deadline
RFP Release	September 4, 2026
Bidders' Conference (Virtual contact info@flxgateway.com)	September 18, 2026
Written Question Deadline	September 25, 2026
Final Q&A Posted	September 30, 2026
Proposal Due Date & Public Opening	October 16, 2026, by 4:00 PM
Evaluation & Rating	October 19 – November 6, 2026
CSS WDB Approval	November 19, 2026
Contract Commencement	January 1, 2027

Submission Logistics All formal proposals must be delivered to: **CSS Workforce Operations and Oversight Committee c/o Judy Cherry 216 North Franklin Street, Watkins Glen, NY 14891**

Proposals received after the specified deadline will be deemed non-responsive. The following programmatic framework outlines the specific WIOA elements the selected provider must be prepared to execute upon contract commencement.

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES & WIOA REQUIRED ELEMENTS

The 14 WIOA program elements provide a holistic framework for youth development, moving beyond transactional job placement to foster comprehensive, long-term career readiness. These elements function as an integrated suite of services designed to dismantle barriers and equip participants with the tools for lifelong economic mobility.

WIOA and NYSDOL Youth Services Compliance Requirements: The selected provider must ensure that all fourteen WIOA youth program elements are available to participants based on individual need, are documented in OSOS using the appropriate Youth service types, and are connected to each participant's ISS. Services may be delivered directly, through referral, or through documented partner agreements; however, the provider remains responsible for

ensuring access, follow-through, case-note documentation, and outcome tracking. Program design must align with WIOA Title I Youth requirements, NYSDOL Youth & Young Adult Services guidance, and applicable USDOL guidance, including requirements for eligibility determination, objective assessment, ISS development, work experience expenditure tracking, follow-up services, and performance accountability.

The 14 Program Elements

1. **Tutoring:** Targeted study skills and dropout prevention to ensure secondary school or equivalency completion.
2. **Alternative Secondary School:** Non-traditional educational pathways for youth who require specialized learning environments.
3. **Work Experience:** Paid and unpaid opportunities, including internships and OJT, to build foundational workplace competencies.
4. **Occupational Skills Training:** Instruction leading to recognized post-secondary credentials in high-demand regional industry sectors.
5. **Concurrent Education:** Integration of workforce preparation and occupational training with academic instruction.
6. **Leadership Development:** Opportunities for civic responsibility, community service, and peer-centered social growth.
7. **Supportive Services:** Essential assistance, such as transportation or childcare, required to enable full program participation.
8. **Adult Mentoring:** Professional guidance and role modeling for a minimum duration of 12 months.
9. **Follow-up Services:** Sustained support and contact for at least 12 months following program completion to ensure retention.
10. **Comprehensive Guidance:** Career counseling and referrals to specialized services, including mental health or substance abuse counseling.
11. **Financial Literacy:** Education on budgeting, credit management, and savings; **contractors must utilize the Junior Achievement curriculum** for this element.
12. **Entrepreneurial Skills:** Training in business plan development and the fundamentals of self-employment.
13. **Labor Market Information:** Career exploration using data-driven tools; **contractors are mandated to use the NYS Dept. of Labor Career Zone system.**
14. **Transition Activities:** Structured support for the shift from secondary education to post-secondary training or higher education.

Work Experience (WE) Spend Mandate The CSS WDB prioritizes Work Experience as the primary tool for mitigating the "at-risk" status of the OSY population. This RFP mandates a minimum expenditure of 30% on WE, with a strategic target of 50% or more, exceeding the WIOA minimum work experience expenditure requirement and reinforcing CSS WDB's commitment to employer-connected learning. Work experiences must be planned, structured learning experiences that occur in a workplace for a limited period of time and may include paid or unpaid work experience, summer employment, year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training when appropriate. Contractors must maintain documentation sufficient to support participant eligibility, employer agreements, worksite monitoring, payroll or stipend records, supportive services, and expenditure tracking. Because Out-of-School Youth are significantly disconnected from the labor market, this high-intensity investment in employer-based learning is the most effective method for converting potential into professional performance.

The complexity of delivering these 14 elements necessitates a rigorous commitment to data-driven accountability and real-time tracking of participant progress.

Follow-Up and Exit Compliance: Follow-up services must be made available for not less than 12 months after program exit, unless the participant declines or cannot be located after documented reasonable attempts. Contractors must document follow-up contacts, services, employment or education status, credential attainment, measurable skill gains, supportive service needs, and any re-engagement strategies in OSOS or the approved case management record. Exit decisions must be based on WIOA and NYSDOL guidance and may not be used to artificially improve performance outcomes.

4. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS & DATA SYSTEM PROTOCOLS

The integrity of the WIOA system relies on the marriage of qualitative case management and real-time data entry. Maintaining these standards ensures transparency and guarantees that the program meets the strict benchmarks established by the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL).

Case Management Requirements Contractors must adopt the "SENSE" model for all case notes, ensuring documentation is specific, objective, and action-oriented. Case management is a daily requirement, centered on the Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The ISS is a "living document" that must be updated as participant goals and barriers evolve, serving as the blueprint for service delivery.

Objective Assessment and ISS Protocol: Prior to or at enrollment, contractors must complete and document an objective assessment that identifies academic levels, basic skills, occupational

interests, prior work history, employability, supportive service needs, barriers to employment, and strengths. The ISS must be developed from that assessment, must identify career pathway goals and service strategies, and must be updated whenever participant goals, barriers, services, or outcomes change. Each service entered in OSOS must be supported by case notes and must clearly connect to the participant's ISS, applicable WIOA youth element, and measurable progress toward education, employment, credential, or skill-gain outcomes.

Data Entry Rules (OSOS) Strict adherence to the One Stop Operating System (OSOS) is non-negotiable:

- **5-Day Rule:** All services must be recorded in OSOS within 5 business days of the service start date to ensure data currency.
- **90-Day Contact:** A qualifying service or contact must be documented at least once every 90 days for every participant.
- **180-Day Gap Limit:** Gaps in in-person service delivery must not exceed 180 days; exceeding this threshold requires explicit written approval from the CSS WFN Youth Program Manager.
- **Service Documentation:** Contractors must use the correct OSOS Youth Program service type and program association for each activity, avoid duplicative service reporting, and enter SENSE-style comments that document who provided the service, what occurred, participant progress, next steps, and how the service supports the ISS.

These protocols are essential to prevent "participant drift," ensuring high-touch engagement for at-risk youth. This operational rigor is supported by a financial framework designed to maximize direct service delivery.

5. FINANCIAL, CONTRACTUAL, AND BUDGETARY LIMITATIONS

This initiative operates under a cost-reimbursement framework that demands high levels of fiscal stewardship. The budgetary structure is designed to minimize overhead and maximize the funds flowing directly to youth participants.

Budgetary Caps Prospective bidders must adhere to the following limitations:

- **Administrative Costs:** Capped at 15% of the total budget.

Liability and Compliance Selected contractors must maintain a minimum of \$1,000,000 in general liability insurance and fulfill all bonding requirements to secure public funds. Contractors are subject to annual audits and quarterly fiscal monitoring. These caps ensure that WIOA funding remains lean and focused on the 14 program elements and the 30% Work Experience spend target.

Allowable Cost and Procurement Compliance: Contractors must administer funds in accordance with WIOA, applicable NYSDOL requirements, the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR Part 200, and CSS WDB fiscal policies. All costs must be necessary, reasonable, allocable, documented, and directly tied to approved program activities. Contractors must maintain records supporting procurement, payroll, participant payments, supportive services, work experience wages, cost allocation, leveraged resources, and partner contributions, and must make those records available for monitoring, audit, corrective action, and closeout review.

Bidders must demonstrate their organizational capacity by strictly following the submission guidelines provided below.

6. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS & FORMATTING

The proposal submission is the first test of a bidder's organizational capacity and attention to detail. Failure to adhere to formatting guidelines may be interpreted as a lack of capacity to manage the administrative rigors of federal funding.

Technical Specifications: Bidders must follow the "2+1" submission rule:

- Two (2) hard-copy originals featuring authorized signatures.
- One (1) electronic copy (USB or digital transfer).

Program Narrative | 15 Pages | | **Executive Summary** | 2 Pages | | **Exclusions** | Job descriptions, resumes, and budget forms are excluded from limits. |

Prohibition Notice The use of special binding, folders, or notebooks is strictly prohibited. Hard copies must be secured with staples or clips in the upper left corner only.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA & MANDATORY ATTACHMENTS

The CSS WDB utilizes a transparent, 220-point scoring system to identify the most advantageous proposal for the region. This system balances programmatic innovation with fiscal efficiency.

Scoring Breakdown

- **Program Strength & Narrative (190 Points):** Evaluates service design, OSY recruitment strategy, and the plan to meet the 45-enrollee mandate.
- **Budget & Leveraged Funding (30 Points):** Assesses fiscal efficiency and the ability to maximize the Work Experience spend.

Mandatory Forms Checklist The following documents must be signed and included for a proposal to be considered responsive:

1. **Attachment 1:** Proposed Budget (Must be completed in full).
2. **Attachment 4:** Proposal Cover Sheet & Contractor Qualifications.

3. **Attachment 5:** Statement of Non-Collusion.
4. **Attachment 6:** Certification of Specification Compliance.
5. **Attachment 8:** Summary of Network Form (Template).
6. **Attachment 9:** Partnership Agreement Form (One for each named partner).

Validation Requirement The "Summary of Network Form" must demonstrate a robust, active ecosystem. CSS WDB requires Partnership Agreement Forms that detail the specific roles and resources each partner—including businesses and social service agencies—contributes to the program. Generic letters of support are insufficient and will not be accepted.

Required Compliance Narrative: Each bidder must include a concise compliance narrative describing how it will proactively meet WIOA Title I Youth and NYSDOL Youth Services requirements, including OSY recruitment and eligibility documentation, objective assessment, ISS development and updates, delivery or referral access to all fourteen elements, OSOS data entry, SENSE case notes, 12-month follow-up, work experience expenditure tracking, supportive service controls, equal opportunity and nondiscrimination obligations, confidentiality, fiscal controls, and procedures for resolving monitoring findings or corrective actions.

The Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben Workforce Development Board is committed to excellence in rural workforce development. We look forward to reviewing innovative proposals that will empower our youth and strengthen the regional economy.