

OVR is announcing a restricted competitive Bid for I&E Projects to serve OVR customers, potentially eligible students with disabilities or parents/family members of students in Transition. Please share this Announcement and the Attachments with your staff/constituents/stakeholders. Thank you for your interest in creating new programs for individuals with disabilities.

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**Subject: Announcement – 2016 Innovation and Expansion Projects – Potential Bidders must qualify for the Invitation to Qualify (ITQ) process and submit the Request for Quote by September 1, 2016**

OVR is interested in developing Innovation and Expansion Projects to serve OVR customers, potentially eligible students or parents/family members of students in Transition. These new programs will comply with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) State Plan and target the development of new strategies and programs that may currently not be available in a District Office's service area. The 2016 State Plan has been revised to include the following language: "These projects will target expansion of employment services into rural and underserved counties, job readiness and job placement of customers with the most significant disabilities who have traditionally been underserved, transition services for students with disabilities, pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities, replication of Project SEARCH for students or youth with disabilities, and/or the development of Industry Integrated Employment programs, as well as other innovative strategies identified by local OVR staff. OVR anticipates that potential contracts would generally be up to \$150,000 for the initial project year. Higher contract awards could be accepted for proposals of exceptional activity, as funds are available." Depending on the availability of funds, OVR will use Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Funds, Title I funds and the corresponding State match to the extent permissible for the development of Innovation and Expansion Projects. OVR is seeking a variety of community projects, many of which will result in competitive integrated employment of persons with the most significant disabilities, as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The term "competitive integrated employment" means work that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis (including self-employment)-

(A) for which an individual -

(i) is compensated at a rate that-

(I)(aa) shall be not less than the higher of the rate specified in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate required in the applicable State or local minimum wage law; and

(bb) is not less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills; or

(II) In the case of an individual who is self-employed, yields an income that is comparable to the income received by other individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are self-employed in similar occupations or on similar tasks and who have similar training, experience, and skills; and

(ii) Is eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees;

(B) That is at a location where the employee with a disability interacts with other persons who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with these persons; and

(C) that, as appropriate, presents opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

Eligible bidders are existing public or private entities that possess the infrastructure, proven track record, and at least five (5) years of demonstrated experience and expertise in providing rehabilitation services to persons with the most significant disabilities. Bidders must also have an established collaborative relationship with the local OVR BVRs/BBVS District Office. **Potential Bidders must be qualified through the Invitation to Qualify (ITQ) process (see instructions below) to receive the Request for Quote and Statement of Work.** At this time, OVR is restricting Bids to the following 6 Innovation and Expansion Project Categories:

### **3. Targeting Transition Planning and Services for Students**

The key objective for this project is the successful execution of a Transition Planning and Services Project to serve students during the school year and additional months of post-graduation services. The overall goal is to place OVR customers who have the most significant disabilities in competitive integrated employment through this Transition Planning and Services Project.

**Under this ITQ Category, OVR will be seeking proposals to increase Parent/Family Engagement in support of students in Transition.**

### **6. Development of an Employment Readiness and Job Placement Program serving Individuals with Mental Health Disabilities**

Develop an Employment Readiness Program for OVR eligible customers resulting in competitive integrated employment. The overall goal is to place OVR customers who have Mental Health disabilities in competitive integrated employment through an Employment Readiness and Job Placement Project.

**Under this ITQ Category, OVR will be seeking proposals to develop and implement Clubhouse Model Transitional Employment Programs for Students with Mental Illness.**

### **9. Targeting the Replication of Project SEARCH for Students with Disabilities or Youth with Disabilities**

Develop Project SEARCH for students with Disabilities or youth with Disabilities, based on the national model for Project SEARCH operating in the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Students with Disabilities and Youth with Disabilities cannot be served in the same project.

**Under this ITQ Category, OVR will be seeking proposals to develop and implement Project SEARCH sites for Students with Disabilities with a focus on underserved geographic areas and underserved populations.**

### **10. Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students with Disabilities**

Develop Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students with the most significant disabilities. Project will serve students with disabilities in Pre-Employment Transition Services Project resulting in the successful transition of students from high school to Competitive Integrated Employment or post-secondary education.

Under this ITQ Category, OVR will be seeking proposals to provide “Pre-Employment Transition Services” in the following specified area:

**Work-Based Learning Experiences:**

**Community Based Vocational Instruction/ Local Government Employment Project/Inclusion Academies/Replication of the United Way of Southwest PA’s “21 and Able” Initiative in conjunction with the Giant Eagle Corporation.**

**11. Targeting Job Readiness and Placement of Individuals with Disabilities Using Post-Secondary School Campuses as the Community-Integrated Assessment Site**

Develop Job Readiness and Placement of Individuals with Disabilities using Post-Secondary School Campuses as the Community-Integrated Assessment Site. Project will serve eligible OVR customers resulting in competitive integrated employment.

**Under this ITQ Category, OVR will be seeking proposals to develop and implement College Vocational Training Programs/College-Based Job Exploration/Post-Secondary Exploration for students with disabilities.**

**12. Targeting Job Readiness and Competitive Integrated Employment of Individuals with Disabilities who traditionally have been employed in a Sheltered Workshop**

Develop a Job Readiness and Competitive Integrated Employment Project for Individuals with disabilities who traditionally have been employed in a Sheltered Workshop. Project will serve individuals determined eligible for OVR services resulting in competitive integrated employment.

**Under this ITQ Category, OVR will be seeking proposals to develop and implement projects for Discovery/Customized Employment- School-Based Services/Provider Capacity Building.**

To become qualified for the Invitation to Quality (ITQ), a potential Bidder would start the qualification process by getting a vendor ID (SAP#) at: [www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us](http://www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us). This is also the website where a potential Bidder would log on to start the ITQ qualification process. Please review the attached PowerPoint describing the ITQ process. The Qualification process for the **Innovation and Expansion Projects ITQ 4400013615** may take a week or two to complete as 3 references are required. **You may qualify for the ITQ with the Department of General Services at any time, but we will begin sending out the Request for Quotes on August 16, 2016.** If you have questions about the ITQ process, please contact Matt Fidler (DGS) at 717-783-2090 or [mfidler@pa.gov](mailto:mfidler@pa.gov). If you have questions about the Innovation and Expansion Projects, email your questions to Chris Forbrich at [lyforbrich@pa.gov](mailto:lyforbrich@pa.gov). Please share this Announcement with your staff/constituents/stakeholders. Thank you for your interest in creating new programs to serve individuals with disabilities.

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