



Request for Information (RFI)

RFI NO. 2021-14

PROJECT TITLE: Career Connect Washington Sector Intermediaries

RESPONSE DUE DATE: Responses to be submitted by October 8, 2021, 5:00 p.m. Pacific.

RFI COORDINATOR: Greg Grahn, Contracts Coordinator.
E-mail for General Inquiries: gregory.grahn@esd.wa.gov
Email for RFI Submissions: esdgpcontractsoffice@esd.wa.gov

RFI SCHEDULE

Responders are to adhere to the following schedule of activities. All times and dates are to be deemed as final end-dates. Responders may provide information prior to the dates established herein.

Activity	Due Dates	Time
Inquiries and Questions	Open at all times	
RFI Submission Deadline	October 8, 2021	5:00 p.m. Pacific

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS:

This RFI will provide information necessary for the approval of four future solicitations. Each future solicitation is expected to be approximately \$300,000.00, for eighteen months of intermediary work.

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1. SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITY

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) ONLY. This RFI is issued for planning purposes. This RFI does not constitute a request for proposal (RFP). However, it is ESD's expectation that based on the volume and content of information received, ESD will plan to issue multiple Request for Proposals (RFP) in October and/or November 2021.

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

The objective of this RFI is to get a general overview of entities that may be capable of performing Career Connect Washington (CCW) Sector Intermediary activities as described in this RFI.

CCW aims to ensure that 100% of students complete [Career Prep](#) and [Career Explore](#) activities and that 60% of students complete a [Career Launch](#) program before the high school class of 2030 is 30 years old. Achieving these goals requires rapid statewide expansion in key industry sectors.

In 2021, CCW conducted extensive employer engagement including individual interviews with employers and employer representatives, group conversations, and research into CCW's current penetration across sectors. These conversations included small and large employers and extended across industries and regions. Our goal was to understand employers' workforce development needs, their experiences with career connected learning, and what CCW could do to help grow and scale programs to meet employer needs.

We found that Washington employers still have an acute need for support in meeting their workforce needs. We also found that employers feel they may be missing opportunities to collaborate effectively with other employers within their sectors to meet shared workforce needs. For example, employers lack awareness and understanding of the career connected learning programs and investments that other employers or educators in their sector are making. Consequently, too often employers are shouldering the burden of creating "one-off" programs or struggling to participate at all when scalable programs or ready co-investors exist within their sector. This results in uneven sectoral offerings with duplicative programs in some areas and large gaps in others.

Our engagement also identified key sectors that are poised for support with high employer need and worker opportunity, employers ready to collaborate, intermediaries with the potential to support these employers, and a key role to play in Washington's equitable recovery. These sectors may include:

- Energy and Clean Tech;

- IT (including a focus on Cyber Security);
- Healthcare;
- Life Sciences;
- Financial Services;
- Education;
- Maritime; and
- Advanced Manufacturing.

1.2. REASON TO RESPOND TO RFI – FUTURE BID OPPORTUNITY

Responders are encouraged to respond to this RFI because ESD intends to use this information to determine whether to engage in future RFPs. ESD needs information to determine whether there are current entities available to perform these types of services and provide adequate statewide coverage. Without the necessary information, ESD may elect to sponsor other programs.

1.3. REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS – FUTURE ACTIONS.

CCW may award \$300,000 contracts, with periods of performance covering roughly 18 months, per sector to Sector Intermediaries to support employers in promoting collaboration and coherency within the sector to grow Career Connected Learning opportunities for employers and students and to support Washington's equitable recovery.

- Contract periods and funding levels may be extended depending on performance on the initial contract and funding availability.
- Each scope may be uniquely tailored to the needs of employers within specific sectors. Activities will be geared towards promoting collaboration and coherency for employers in order to grow Career Connected Learning including:
 - Cataloguing employer needs and mapping those needs against current Career Connected Learning programs;
 - Helping to scale existing programs across employers and regions within a sector;
 - Working with CCW intermediaries, networks, and existing partners to grow new programs to fill gaps and meet needs;
 - Growing student participation within CCL programs; and
 - Connecting CCL efforts with other emerging workforce development efforts within the sector.
- Sector Intermediaries must demonstrate an existing connection to employers and the sector. Entities may include industry associations, Centers of Excellence, sector-focused workforce development organizations or community-based organizations, and consultants.
- Key sectoral leaders - including employers - will work closely with CCW to craft unique scopes of work, participate in intermediary selection, and help manage intermediaries once selected.
- Sector Intermediaries will support all employers across a sector (and not just sectoral leads).
- Sector Intermediaries may support CCW efforts statewide in employer engagement for federal grant applications.

1.4. WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE – FUTURE DELIVERABLES.

- Employers have a shared understanding of workforce needs in their sector and utilize CCW programs as their preferred talent solution.
- Through close connections to CCW and with assistance from Sector Intermediaries, employers in each of the identified sectors address their workforce needs by leveraging career connected learning programs.
- Successful career connected learning programs are scaled across the state to serve the needs of students and employers.
- Opportunities for new Career Launch, Prep, and Explore programs are identified and developed to fill workforce needs.
- Regional Networks and Program Intermediaries (program builders) have a one-stop resource for employer connections in the identified sector.
- Employers adopt Career Launch training model as a standard business practice.

1.5 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS – FUTURE SOLICITATION

There are no minimum requirements or qualifications for responding to this RFI.

However, minimum qualifications for a future solicitation may include the following:

- Existing and demonstrable working relationships with key employers within sector;
- The support of key employers within the sector;
- Demonstrated understanding of current state of workforce challenges and opportunities within the sector;
- Ability to work within CCW system, including CCW networks, intermediaries, K-12 coordinators, and statewide team;
- Capacity to complete the scope of work without needing substantial ramp up time to add resources or develop critical relationships; and
- Vendor must be licensed, or able and willing to obtain a license, to do business in the State of Washington.

2. CONTENT INCLUDED IN RESPONSES

Responses to this RFI should include the following Content.

2.1 ENTITY PROFILE (APPENDIX A)

Responders must provide demographic information related to their entity, and whether their entity has held prior state contracts. (NOTE: Prior state contracting will not be a required element in any future solicitation, but it may be evaluated as a relevant quality.)

2.2 INFORMATION ON SECTOR INTERMEDIARY PROPOSALS

Responders should submit written proposals which address each of the following inquiries. Proposals can be submitted as a separate Word File.

(NOTE: ESD is not currently asking for a full step-by-step proposal. Responses to these inquiries are public / non-privileged documents.)

INQUIRY #1: Identify the industry sector(s) for which your entity is capable of serving as a CCW Sector Intermediary.

INQUIRY #2: Describe your current relationships with employers in the sector(s) and how these relationships would be leveraged to expand career connected learning statewide.

INQUIRY #3: What are the unique workforce needs in the sector(s)? How would you use this grant to solve those challenges? How would you leverage the rest of the CCW system to support? How might you, as the Sector Intermediary, map employers' workforce needs to current career connected learning programs and address gaps?

INQUIRY #4: What are the necessary qualifications, proficiencies, and resources of a successful Sector Intermediary in the sector(s)? How does your organization's current capabilities compare with the needs of a sector intermediary? What capacities do you need to build?

3. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR SUBMITTING RESPONDERS

3.1 RFI COORDINATOR

The RFI Coordinator is the sole point of contact in ESD for this RFI. All communication between the Responders and ESD should be with the RFI Coordinator as follows:

Name	Gregory Grahn
E-Mail Address	ggrahn@esd.wa.gov

3.2 RESPONSES – Electronic Submissions Accepted

Responders should submit their Responses via email as follows:

Email address: esdgpcontractsoffice@esd.wa.gov,
Subject line: RFI #2021-11 - [Your entity's name].

Responses should be received by deadline in the RFI Schedule on the front page.

3.3 INQUIRIES - Questions and Answers

If responder has questions, issues, or concerns regarding this RFI, such matters should be put in writing and emailed to the RFI Coordinator any time prior to the submission deadline. RFI Coordinator may either respond to the email directly or may provide a global response by posting it as a responsive amendment in WEBS.

3.4 COST OF RESPONSE PREPARATION

ESD will not reimburse Bidders for any costs associated with preparing or presenting a response to this RFI.

APPENDIX A: Entity Profile (§2.1)

Please provide the Information below.

ENTITY INFORMATION:

a)	Entity Name	
	Street Address	
	Mailing Address	
	Delivery Address	
	City, State, ZIP	
b)	Email Address	

c)	Names, addresses, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of the sole proprietor, managing partner, or principal officer as appropriate to the entity	
	Name & Title:	
	Number of Years Company in Business:	
	Number of Years serving the Entity.	
	Telephone Number :	

*d)	WA State UBI		<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
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- In addition to the above: List all state contracts this entity has held over the past five years