

*REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:*  
**Job Training & Support  
Services**

Funded by the  
**Ocean Tech Works**  
**Economic Development Administration**  
**Good Jobs Award**

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*ISSUE DATE:* *June 30, 2025*

*PROPOSALS DUE:* *July 14, 2025*

*Responses must be delivered by email by 5PM*

*Inquiries:* [lbrickle@polarismep.org](mailto:lbrickle@polarismep.org)

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**Cover Sheet:**  
**ORGANIZATIONS**  
**SUBMITTING BID**  
***JOB TRAINING REQUEST***  
**FOR PROPOSALS**  
**Proposals Due: July 14, 2025**

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Anticipated partners (including employers) and targeted occupation(s):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature/Title: Lead Organization

Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Please address correspondence to:**

Polaris MEP

[Training@urirf.org](mailto:Training@urirf.org)

## I. INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposals (RFP) solicits proposals for **job training and support** services for workforce training programs that provide clients with skills to enter into careers that are considered **Good Jobs** in the Advanced Manufacturing, Marine Trades and Blue Economy sectors within the duration of this program. Selected applicants will enter into contracts with University of Rhode Island Research Foundation dba Polaris MEP.

## II. PURPOSE OF FUNDS

The intent of this RFP is to serve adults seeking full-time, permanent employment in the Advanced Manufacturing, Defense and Blue Economy Sectors. The primary outcome for programs funded under this RFP is full-time work at a livable wage in a Good Job.

## III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants include non-profit and for-profit providers of training and education services. Providers need to be located in Rhode Island or Southeastern Massachusetts (New Bedford or Fall River (or delivering services in this region or supporting these residents) Accessibility for residents will be a key evaluation criterion. Proposals must demonstrate capacity to provide state-of-the-art services to successfully prepare people for employment and increase participation through. Polaris MEP is interested in proposals from training providers with the following competencies:

- Demonstrated ability to successfully educate, train and job-place low-income adults, including one or more of the specific target populations identified above.
- Programs for:
  - Computer Numerical Control (CNC) training
  - Welding
  - Pipefitting
  - Robotics
  - Marine Trades
  - Stand alone support services
- Staff expertise in providing proactive case management to support clients in overcoming barriers to training, completing a program and retaining employment.
- Demonstrated ability to adapt curriculum and instructional methodology to meet the needs of people with a variety of learning styles and ability levels.
- Internal monitoring capabilities which allow for program modification as needed.
- Staff experience in engaging employers and strong employer involvement in program design.
- Staffing structures which support the services proposed.

#### **IV. SERVICES REQUESTED**

The Ocean Tech Works program, funded through a Good Jobs Award from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, seeks proposals for programs offering job skills training leading to good jobs at livable wages in Advanced Manufacturing and Ocean Technology/Blue Economy. Services should include outreach and recruitment, in-depth assessment, classroom and (as appropriate) work-site instruction, case management, educational and career counseling, job placement, and post-placement services. It is anticipated that contracts will be for 12 months, with an option for 12 month renewal based on performance.

This RFP solicits programs and services targeted to individuals in need of skilled entry-level employment. This can include people who have been out of the labor force for some time as well as individuals who are underemployed. For purposes of this RFP, underemployed can mean: those in temporary, part-time or unstable positions; those working in jobs without benefits; those whose income does not suffice to meet the needs of their families.

In funding workforce development services, URIRF adheres to a set of principles, incorporated into this RFP, which include:

- The provision of high quality workforce services leading to employment with benefits at family sustaining wages.
- Programs designed to meet the needs of specific target populations with multiple barriers to employment through various support services.
- Integrated training models which incorporate adult basic education or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and which connect participants to jobs or to post-secondary education leading to employment.
- The use of technology in training programs to increase efficiency and effectiveness while meeting customer needs and enhancing employability.
- Investment in comprehensive assessment tools and processes which value customer choice for those entering job training programs.
- Reemployment of dislocated workers and a commitment to provide training and related services to low-income adults with multiple barriers to employment.
- A dual customer approach which enhances labor market opportunities for both the job seeker and employer.

This RFP seeks proposals with specific employer partners who are invested in the proposed training program, exhibiting methods and curricula aligned with the full skill set sought by employers in the targeted field of employment. Proposals should clearly describe the skill competencies required by the employer partner(s).

Allowable program types:

- ❖ **Occupational skills training** provides individuals with the specific skills needed for a particular occupation. Employers are (or were) involved in the development of curricula, and may agree to interview program graduates and hire the most appropriate. The training incorporates basic education and soft skills development to meet the needs of the target population. Programs may include intensive ESOL in an “English-for- Employment” model, but generic, stand-alone ESOL services unconnected to employment will not be considered responsive to this RFP. In-depth assessment ensures enrollees are appropriate; intensive case management supports them through the program and during the job placement phase; and retention services help ensure participants maintain employment (or advance) after placement.
- ❖ **On The Job Training (OJT)**, like transitional employment, provides training by means of a job placement. However, in OJT, the expectation is that the employer providing the on-the-job training will ultimately hire the individual on a permanent basis. Wages during the training period are typically shared by the employer and the service provider. OJT lowers hiring and training costs for employers and opens doors for target populations in specific industries. Both OJT and transitional employment are expensive models due to the need to pay wages to participants; applicants are encouraged to secure matching funds to cover some or all of those costs. As with transitional employment, a high level of employer commitment is required.

Budgets will be carefully reviewed for appropriate and justifiable costs per participant and per instructional hour. Cost will be one factor in making funding determinations; it will not be the only factor. If you have other financial resources available for the program you are proposing, describe them in the budget narrative.

## **A. Required program elements**

### **1. Organizational Capacity**

**Organizational Background:** Provide an overview of your organization, including its mission, vision, grant management capacity, structure, and history. Explain how organization aligns with the intent of the program. Highlight relevant resources, facilities, and partnerships. Be transparent about areas needing improvement and your plans to address them. Present a detailed and justified budget that aligns with the project scope and demonstrates financial

accountability. Highlight existing partnerships that enhance capacity.

## **2. Recruitment**

Applicants must demonstrate in their proposal an understanding of the target population they have chosen and how to engage it. Appropriate participants can be identified via the city's one-stop career centers, DTA offices, homelessness service providers, public housing developments, community based multi-service agencies, community development corporations, community health centers, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, regional re-entry centers and economic assistance programs. Applicants must be capable of executing a comprehensive recruitment strategy for the target population, and must show how the strategy they propose will lead to the desired level of enrollment.

## **3. Assessment**

In order to ensure participants are successful and receive appropriate services, a thorough and in-depth assessment of the prospective participant is essential. Staff expertise in areas relevant to the target population, along with employer input about industry needs, add particular value to the assessment process. Applicants should explain the process they use to assess potential participants, the steps and tools involved, and how their assessment protocol improves the service model. Intake and assessment should flow into and directly inform case management and the delivery of services. Individuals found to be unready for the program must be referred to appropriate services. Attendance and conduct policies should be discussed with the participant at the time of the initial assessment. Termination policies must be consistent, clearly defined and publicized in writing.

## **4. Case management, career counseling and support services**

A clear case management strategy for a coordinated response to participants' needs is essential to their success. This begins with career counseling and the development of an individual service plan based on a thorough assessment of the individual's assets and aspirations, as well as any barriers to employment. The plan must be jointly developed with the participant, and regularly reviewed by the service provider team and the participant. The plan should have clearly-stated education, employment and career goals, with projected start and end dates for all activities. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how case management is integrated into their service model. Effective case management assists participants in overcoming multiple barriers to success, including but not limited to scheduling difficulties, transportation problems, child care issues, financial challenges and motivational concerns. Case managers monitor participant attendance and performance, problem-solving with them as necessary. After job placement, staff continue to provide support as needed to ensure job retention and to address concerns employers may have.

***Stand alone contracted services for Barrier Reduction Support will be considered for***

*supporting all program participants.*

## **5. Contextual learning**

The purpose of this initiative is to prepare low-income individuals for employment. Many of those served will have very low educational levels. Programs are expected to utilize contextual models which combine academic and technical proficiencies, developing basic educational skills, soft skills and job skills simultaneously. How this integration is achieved is not prescribed, but all training programs should have a basic skills component which meets the needs of participants and is congruent with the target industry and occupation.

## **6. Employer Partnerships**

A strong employer partnership is critical in any successful training venture. In a true partnership, the training provider offers services of genuine value to the employer. Training providers should be able to reduce hiring and training costs for their employer partners and eliminate some of the risk employers assume in their hiring decisions. In return, effective employer partnerships add real value to a training program. Employers should be involved in the tailoring of training designs to meet industry needs and standards. Employers can also guarantee interviews for graduates, and help training providers and participants understand their industry's HR practices.

Given the instability of the economy, applicants are encouraged to find ways to engage more than one employer, and to describe how job development with multiple employers will work.

## **V. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

In addition to the academic and vocational goals outlined in your proposal, programs will be expected to achieve positive outcomes for at least 80% of those enrolled in the program, defined as placement into a training-related job at an average wage of at least \$18



hour, with 60-day retention. If, because of your target population, you anticipate placement rates or wages below these levels, you must provide a clear and compelling explanation as to why these performance standards should not apply to your program.

## **VI. PROGRAM MONITORING/REPORTING/BILLING**

URIRF dba Polaris MEP will conduct site visits to monitor compliance and quality of services. This includes:

- Achievement of objectives in accordance with proposal and contract;
- Integrity of administrative systems and eligibility determination; and
- Quality of service evaluation through observation and informal interviews.

These monitoring activities may take the form of administrative record reviews, interviews of staff and/or participants, and general observations of the facilities, operations and training activities. Participant files must contain the following:

1. A copy of the participant's intake form and all eligibility documentation
2. Documentation of US employment authorization
3. All assessments
4. Individual Service Plan
5. Documentation of case management and support services
6. Resume and job search records
7. Record of attendance and documentation of activities where appropriate (workshop or activity attendance record, etc.)

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to perform administrative responsibilities including: maintaining records of participant eligibility, attendance and progress; tracking participation; and submitting program reports and invoices in a timely manner.

## VII. TERMS OF PROCUREMENT

Responses to this RFP must be received by URIRF by email to [training@urirf.org](mailto:training@urirf.org) **no later than 5:00 p.m. on July 14, 2025. Late proposals will not be accepted.**

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of the proposal, congruence with the goals of this RFP, past program performance, geographic distribution of services, and service to target populations. The narrative portion of the proposal must be **no more than four pages, single-spaced**, in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Point values are allocated to each section of the proposal narrative as follows:

Proposal Narrative	20 points
Understanding of Target Population:	15 points
Program Design:	50 points
Budget and Budget Narrative: (not counted in 4-page limit)	15 points

## **Proposal Contents List**

Your proposal should contain the following items, in this order:

1. Proposal Cover Sheet this
2. One Page Program Summary
3. Proposal Narrative (4 pages max.)
4. Budget
5. Budget Narrative (per participant in a tuition model)
6. List of committed / planned employers
7. Sample of Individual Service Plan
8. Syllabus and/or curriculum outline (outline only)

## **VIII. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

### **1. One-Page Program Summary**

On one side of one piece of paper, briefly describe your proposed program, including specific target population, number of participants, program site(s), start and end dates, industry/employers and positions to be trained for, educational and employment outcomes, and other key features such as support services, internships, etc. Identify any partners with whom you will collaborate to offer key components of the design. This page does not count toward the 4-page limit.

### **2. Organizational Capacity**

Briefly describe your organization's work over the past two years involving low-income or unemployed populations. Describe your experience and expertise in the following areas:

- Financial Management & Organizational Structure
- Occupational skills training
- Job development and placement
- Counseling, case management, and post-placement services

Performance Provide performance outcomes (enrollments and training-related job placements) for these services. Please provide a reference URIRF can contact regarding your organization's administrative capabilities.

Please describe the staffing plan for the proposed initiative. Identify by name the staff members responsible for this program, briefly describing their experience and qualifications, as well as their roles and responsibilities. Identify the staff who will manage the participant tracking system. Attach job descriptions and resumes for all positions involved in the project, noting whether they are to be funded or provided in-kind. Identify which staff and/or functions are direct service and which are administrative. Label the job descriptions with the name of the staff person, or indicate if the position is vacant.

### **3. Understanding of Target Population**

Please describe the characteristics and needs of the specific population you intend to serve, assuming the reader is unfamiliar with the population. What are the challenges and opportunities for these individuals? How does this population differ from the general population? What direct experience have you had with members of this population and how did you accommodate their needs? Which aspects of your program are designed specifically to address the challenges faced by this population? If not everyone in your program will be from this target population (e.g. if you anticipate serving 60% ex-offenders and 40% others), describe who the rest of the participants will be. Some members of your

target population are likely to have disabilities; how will you accommodate persons with disabilities? Show evidence that there are sufficient numbers of people who would be both interested in and ready for your program.

#### **4. Program Design**

Describe in detail your proposed design for offering each of the following required components: recruitment, assessment, case management, job training, employer involvement and job placement and post-placement services. Explain how these functions, as designed, are appropriate for your target population and its needs.

##### **A. Recruitment:**

Discuss your plan for recruitment, including the specific target group you will recruit, the neighborhoods they live in, the organizations and audiences with which you will communicate, and the tools and methods you will use. List by name any you will recruit from, and how you will do so. How large a pool of recruits will you need to bring into your intake process in order to identify the cohort of enrolled participants you propose to serve?

##### **B. Assessment:**

Describe the initial interview and assessment process you will use to determine individuals' academic and vocational needs and to develop an individual learning plan for each participant. Identify the specific skills assessed and the tools used, including interest inventories. What makes a candidate appropriate for the proposed training? Discuss the entry requirements (math and/or reading levels, etc.). What happens to individuals who are determined to be unready or ineligible for your program? How will you know if your participants are attaining the appropriate competencies? Describe how you will work with the individual to reach agreement on the plan and make modifications as necessary.

##### **C. Case Management**

Discuss your organization's case management system, including the range of services participants will receive through case management, and how you will maintain a strong, effective presence for participants during the assessment, training and follow-up periods. Who will provide case management? How often? Who will provide career counseling and post-placement services? What system do you use for documenting, tracking and sharing case management information?

D. Job Training:

Describe your job training program. Discuss your goals, objectives and methods for instruction in occupational training. Describe the specific competencies that your trainees will master. Attach a syllabus or curriculum outline for each instructional component, sample lesson plans, and a daily or weekly schedule of program activities. Please explain your approach to the integration of basic skills, computer skills, soft skills and vocational skills. Use examples from your curriculum to illustrate how students will learn or strengthen cognitive and technical skills in context. If you are proposing a transitional employment or OJT approach, explain how the paid employment portion of the service model is integrated with your other service elements (assessment, case management, skills training). How will participants transition into the paid experience? What is the training plan for participants during OJT or transitional employment?

E. Employer Involvement and Job Placement:

List the employers you are targeting for placement of your graduates. Identify the specific job titles (with wages) for which your participants will be competing, with a brief description of each job. Cite appropriate labor market information supporting your choice of targeted occupations. Discuss how you will prepare trainees for on-line job search and on-line applications. Provide a timeline for the process and timing of your job development, placement and retention activities. Discuss in detail the ways in which your partnerships with employers will contribute to the success of your training, job development, placement and retention efforts. Clearly define the roles and activities of the participating employer(s). Discuss the ways in which employer involvement has contributed to your curriculum and design to make them more closely linked to the skills required by the industry and job(s) for which you are training. Attach a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between your organization and the participating employer(s) outlining the responsibilities and contributions of the employer(s). The MOA must be signed by the CEO of each organization or a designee who has senior operational authority for the area of employment covered by the program.

**5. Budget**

1. Budget forms: In your own format, give a detailed 12-month budget covering all aspects of the project rolled up into a tuition model. Include costs for all functions (recruitment, assessment, classroom and other instructional components, case management, job development and placement, client tracking, oversight and administration, fiscal management and oversight, reporting) as a single line item with the ability to provide line item breakdown). *Separate out unique line items as required, especially for support service ONLY proposals.*

2. Budget narrative: Prepare a budget narrative describing every line item.