

**WorkAdvance Program
Responses to Questions #2
Part of the Federal Social Innovation Fund
Updated November 12, 2010**

Note: As stated in the WorkAdvance Request for Proposals (RFP), responses to questions, update notices, and addenda posted on the website are official updates to the RFP. It is the responsibility of the applicant to read and adhere to the responses to questions, update notices, and addenda posted on the website when responding to the RFP.

I. FUNDING / FINANCE:

Q1. Please provide us with guidance for providing a “Chart of Accounts” which is requested on pages 22 and 30 of the RFP? Exactly what information is to be included in this document and what is the format?

A1. The Chart of Accounts is a list of all account names and numbers used on general ledger in the financial system of the lead applicant.

Q2. What portion of the grant will be line item? What portion performance-based?

A2. The payment structure will be based on line-item budget reimbursement. The specific terms of award will be governed by the agreement signed with the Mayor’s Fund and the Sub-grantee. The Mayor’s Fund may advance up to 25% of the total annual sub-grantee award. Subsequent sub-grantee requests for payment based on actual allowable costs incurred may be submitted on a quarterly basis.

Q3. Will organizations be provided with resources for follow-up services after all training cohorts have been placed?

A3. During the up to five year funding period of the SIF, the sub-grantee award is expected to cover costs associated with all core services (as outlined in the RFP starting on page 14), including post-placement follow-up services to promote advancement and retention. Participants trained and placed in the last year of the program would not receive SIF funded follow up services beyond the end of the contract.

II. EVALUATION/DATA:

Q4. Will MDRC or any other group be involved in providing organizations funded guidance on the appropriate method of random selection of candidates?

A4. Yes. MDRC will work with organizations to determine the point of random assignment, train staff on the random assignment procedures, monitor random assignment and troubleshoot if problems should arise.

Q5. Will individuals recruited and selected for the pilot phase be part of the overall numbers of the study? At what point within the five year grant period would the 18 month random assignment period begin?

A5. The random assignment process will begin after the completion of a pilot phase as determined by the Mayor’s Fund Collaborative in consultation with the sub-grantees, taking into consideration when organizations have strong program operations in place. We assume

that random assignment will begin 3-6 months after program start and that it will take approximately 18 months to enroll the full study sample. Participants served in the initial pilot phase prior to the launch of random assignment will not be included in the evaluation. The Mayor's Fund Collaborative will work with the sub-grantee to determine exactly how many participants will be served in each period.

Q6. Will the random assignment selection be done by a person or will it be a computerized selection process?

A6. Random assignment will be conducted via computer; sub-grantee program staff will use a web-based module, linked to MDRC, to determine an individual's random assignment designation.

Q7. Will another entity be responsible for the collection and evaluation of the data submitted by the training providers? If so, what organization will it be? Who will collect control group participant data?

A7. The sub-grantee will be responsible for collecting selected baseline data at the point of random assignment (such as gender, education, income, employment, etc.) for all individuals (both program and controls). The sub-grantee will also be responsible for reporting on program services received and outcomes for individuals in WorkAdvance. If proposing a partnership model, the lead applicant will collect all service data from its partners to transmit to the Mayor's Fund Collaborative.

MDRC will be responsible for collecting follow-up data for both program and control group members. Such data will include both administrative records such as earnings reported to the Unemployment Insurance system and surveys. MDRC will also be responsible for all data analysis and program evaluation.

Q8. Will there be incentives built into the process to ensure a high response rate to surveys?

A8. A survey firm selected by MDRC will track both program and control group members and administer the survey. At a minimum, MDRC typically strives for obtaining responses for at least 80 percent of the sample members. Survey firms use a number of techniques for assuring high response rates, which may include providing incentives to sample members who complete the surveys.

Q9. How many surveys will be conducted during the training and post-training phase of the study?

A9. Individuals will be surveyed within 12 to 18 months of the date of their random assignment. A second wave of surveys may be conducted in each city between 30 to 36 months after the date each person is randomly assigned.

Q10. Will there be a time line provided for the study from start to end?

A10. The Mayor's Fund Collaborative will develop a detailed timeline with selected providers once awards are made. Information about service length can be found in the RFP on pgs 17-19.

Q11. When are the study findings anticipated to be available?

A11. There will be several reports over the five years of the SIF and in the years following. No set dates are determined at this time.

Q12. On Page 19 of the RFP document (first bullet-section entitled "Research Enrollment") it states that 1,500 individuals are expected to be enrolled over an 18 month period with half randomly selected into the WorkAdvance initiative. However, two bullets down in the section entitled "Minimum Served" it states that a minimum of 300 participants should be served. Is there flexibility in enrolling less than the 1,500 individuals during the 18 month period as the

bulleted section entitled “Minimum Served” implies? Is that the 300 minimum stated in the RFP?

A12. In each city, the total required number of individuals to be enrolled in the research sample is 1500 (of which 750 individuals are assigned to the WorkAdvance program). A single sub-grantee may be selected in New York City, in which case they would be expected to reach these full service numbers (enrolling 1,500 and serving half of them). If two or more sub-grantees are selected in any city, they will each be expected to serve a portion of the total.

Therefore, applicants may propose to enroll a portion of the 1,500 city-wide total (of which one-half will be in WorkAdvance), and should propose a budget that reflects the number served. Please see pages 18 and 19 of the RFP for an example scenario in which two sub-grantees in one city each enroll a portion of the total. The Mayor’s Fund will select sub-grantees in a manner that ensures they have the combined ability to generate the needed sample of 1,500 over an 18-month period. Funding for each sub-grantee will reflect the number of WorkAdvance participants proposed to be served.

Q13. We are based in another state, and our proposal would be for a project specifically for the healthcare sector in Northeastern Ohio. Would job seekers we serve outside the healthcare sector project, and those we serve outside of northeastern Ohio, be able to make up the control group? Can they receive other services from our organization outside of the sector specific services?

A13. No. Sub-grantees will be required to enroll participants from the same geographic area, using random assignment. Using individuals served in other programs, or individuals served in another geographic region as the control group is likely to result in two groups that differ in demographic characteristics and/or in the mix of employers and/or economic environment. Control group members cannot receive WorkAdvance services or services similar to WorkAdvance within the applicant’s organization.

III. PROGRAMATIC

Q14. Is the intent of the RFP to expand existing services of applicant agencies? Is the intent of the RFP to enhance existing services of applicant agencies?

A14. SIF Funds may be used to expand services to new participants, given the following parameters:

- 1) Funds should not supplant any existing funding
- 2) Funds are intended to serve new program participants over and above the services and resources currently being provided and therefore should not be used to support individuals already being served by the sub-grantee.
- 3) Programs must provide all of the core elements described in the RFP in Section III.C- Program Approach.
- 4) If expanding an existing program, all participants in that program would be subject to random assignment during the random assignment enrollment period. Clients already enrolled prior to that period would not be impacted.

Q15. In order to meet the goals, will we have the flexibility to offer additional training not originally stated in our proposal based on employer demand?

A15. Yes. This type of flexibility to respond to employer demand will help ensure program success. Each sub-grantee will determine the appropriate training to be provided as consistent with the program model and taking into consideration employer needs. Any substantive changes to the information submitted in the original grant will require approval from the Mayors Fund.

Q16. Will we recruit low wage working adults in addition to those currently unemployed as stated in the target population paragraph?

A16. Yes, the intent is to serve both unemployed and employed low-wage workers who meet the eligibility requirements and are interested and suited to pursuing the types of jobs that are covered by the sector(s) the sub-grantee is targeting. See also page 7 of the RFP (overview of model) and page 16 (target population) for more information.

Q17. What is the official follow-up period with graduates after training?

A17. As stated on page 17 of the RFP, the program is expected to serve participants for up to 2 years in total, including post-placement services of up to a year. This is an estimate and after program implementation begins the sub-grantee and Mayor's Fund Collaborative may decide to shorten or lengthen this service period based on programmatic considerations.

Reminder: All questions about the WorkAdvance RFP must be submitted by November 16, 2010 to SIF@cityhall.nyc.gov to ensure a response.