

## ***CareerSource Florida***

### **Invitation to Negotiate**

#### **Quick Response Training Strategic Marketing and Business Outreach Plan**

***October 15, 2014***

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) is to elicit responses from professional organizations interested in contracting with Workforce Florida, Inc., (dba CareerSource Florida) to develop and launch a strategic marketing and business outreach plan for Florida's nationally recognized Quick Response Training (QRT) Program. The goal of this plan is to elevate QRT to a best-in-class competitive position by expanding, improving and increasing market awareness of the availability of funds, the program's value proposition and promotion of the success of QRT, which provides state grant funding for customized training to qualified, new or expanding businesses in industries targeted for economic development in Florida.

The plan will need to identify a long-term vision and strategic objectives for QRT as well as development and implementation of marketing and advertising tools and tactics to enhance the program's competitive position and market outreach based on gaining a greater understanding of business customers and potential customers; key influencers including but not limited to economic developers, site selection consultants, workforce development professionals (particularly those within the CareerSource Florida network who provide employment and training solutions for businesses of all sizes); education and training partners and stakeholders; and public policy leaders.

The multi-year plan must incorporate research, including market intelligence gained from focus groups, a SWOT analysis and a competitive analysis of benchmark states' customized training programs, as well as recommendations for QRT marketing strategies and operational improvements that, among other things, align with Florida economic development priorities, leverage the CareerSource Florida network's Customer Relation Management (CRM) system capabilities to support greater program efficiency and effectiveness and elevate QRT's reputation as a best-in-class program among national competitors.

The plan will provide a clear and concise roadmap for CareerSource Florida's current and future investments in the marketing and promotion of QRT among businesses, including Florida small businesses, and key influencers.

The selected firm also will actively implement recommended and approved marketing tactics including, but not limited to, messaging to internal and external audiences, marketing and brand-building materials such as brochures, digital outreach such as website enhancements and social media outreach, and advertisements and media placements to support the program's strategic marketing and business outreach objectives.

## **BACKGROUND**

Administered by CareerSource Florida, the state-funded QRT program is performance-based and provides partial reimbursement to Florida businesses in “qualified targeted industries” that are creating new jobs either through a new location or expansion. Since its inception in 1993, QRT has supported training of more than 156,186 Floridians by more than 715 businesses.

Florida businesses benefit from the training support that leads to increased competitiveness, a better skilled workforce, increased productivity and profits, company growth and reduced employee turnover. Their newly trained employees acquire transportable and transferable skills that support the retention of their jobs and make them more productive and valuable, often leading to increased career advancement opportunities. An example of the tangible benefit the training provides for Floridians is the increase in earnings potential following QRT-support training. According to the most recent data available, QRT trainees’ wages increased 36 percent a year after completing their customized training.

QRT also is among the chief tools used by state and local economic development professionals in Florida to support job-creation projects by helping new and growing businesses hire, train and retain a competitive workforce. In a 2012 Florida competitiveness study, QRT was cited by local economic development professionals throughout Florida as the No. 1 program with the largest impact on their ability to win multi-state competitive projects.

The program has established a national reputation as a resource for effectively helping Florida to retain and attract businesses that create high-quality jobs. It has been recognized for its success by national site selection and economic development publications such as Business Facilities magazine and business groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The state currently sets aside \$12 million annually for new QRT funding, which has doubled since 2012. While boosting the program’s competitiveness, the increased state funding still lags customized training funding in other competitor states such as Georgia, Alabama and Texas.

Still, the QRT program’s accessibility and strong track record of success has made it a go-to resource for businesses in sectors targeted for economic development including manufacturing, financial and professional services, life sciences, information technology and trade.

CareerSource Florida works collaboratively statewide with workforce development, economic development and education partners, including state colleges, to ensure businesses creating high-value jobs can access and utilize the QRT program.

CareerSource Florida is the public/private corporation established by the Florida Legislature to provide policy direction and general oversight to the state’s workforce development system, today known as the CareerSource Florida network. As established in Chapter 445, Florida Statutes, this workforce system is comprised of the state workforce board, known as CareerSource Florida, the Department of Economic Opportunity, which serves as the administrative and fiscal entity for the Board and the 24 regional workforce boards. A board of

directors appointed by the Governor and Legislature oversees the delivery of workforce services in Florida. CareerSource Florida is managed by a president and professional team with offices in Tallahassee, Orlando and Navarre.

The workforce development system in Florida serves two primary customers – job seekers and employers seeking skilled workers. Workforce development services are provided to these customers primarily through the 24 regional workforce boards throughout the state, which direct nearly 100 career centers that deliver local employment and training services. In addition to QRT, CareerSource Florida also administers the Incumbent Worker Training program, which provides federal funds to employers for training needed by their existing workers due to changing market conditions. Along with these grant programs, CareerSource Florida leads numerous other strategic initiatives directed by the

Potential respondents are encouraged to visit the CareerSource Florida website: [www.careersourceflorida.com](http://www.careersourceflorida.com).

**SUBMISSION OF RESPONSES.** Through this ITN, CareerSource Florida intends to select and negotiate a contract with a professional organization possessing the capacity and experience to successfully implement this initiative. Organizations interested in submitting a response to this Invitation to Negotiation must respond by completing the online [Organization Questionnaire](#) included with this ITN. The [Organization Questionnaire](#) reflects the criteria established for proposal reviews. **Responses must be received on or before 5:00 PM, Eastern, Monday, November 17, 2014.**

**SELECTION.** Potential respondents are reminded that this is not a bid nor a Request for Proposals and, therefore, CareerSource Florida is not seeking actual proposals, pricing plans or contract offers. This Invitation to Negotiate merely seeks to identify organizations that are interested in establishing a contract with CareerSource Florida for professional services. It should be noted that the contract period will begin upon the effective date of agreement through June 30, 2015, at which time all funds for this project must be expended. The budget range for developing the Quick Response Training Strategic Marketing and Business Outreach Plan as well as launch of the marketing and outreach campaign is \$80,000-\$100,000. CareerSource Florida will review the responses and evaluate proposals based on what it deems to be the most suitable. CareerSource Florida retains the sole authority for developing and applying the criteria it will use to evaluate proposals.

CareerSource Florida may choose to request that one or more of the responding organizations make a face-to-face presentation to an individual or individuals reviewing responses. If needed, every effort will be made to schedule the presentation(s) at a time and on a date satisfactory to the respondent. Presentations, if necessary, will be scheduled in Tallahassee, probably at CareerSource Florida headquarters on Waldo Palmer Lane. CareerSource Florida, at its sole discretion, may determine that a personal presentation(s) is not necessary. Tentatively, CareerSource Florida plans to schedule presentations, if necessary, **the week of December 1, 2014.**

NOTE: When CareerSource Florida has made its decision regarding which organization it deems to be the most suitable and qualified for this project, it will notify all respondents of that decision. CareerSource Florida will then set up a meeting with the organization it selects and commence negotiations relative to specific 1) scope of services, 2) timetables for implementation and 3) costs. If negotiations are unsuccessful, CareerSource Florida retains the right to initiate contract negotiations with the most suitable respondent and continue that process until it successfully negotiates a contract. CareerSource Florida retains the sole authority to make its selection based on what it determines to be its best interest. CareerSource Florida, at its sole discretion, may reject any and all responses as not meeting the needs of this project. **CareerSource Florida anticipates that a selection decision will be made sometime during the week of December 8, 2014.**

**CONTRACT.** The contract resulting from this ITN will be a two-party contract between CareerSource Florida and the organization that is selected. Any subcontractors the organization may use from time to time during the course of the contract will not be a party to the organization's contract with CareerSource Florida.

**CONTACT.** Organizations should direct inquiries regarding this ITN to Adriane Glenn Grant, via email at the following address:

[agrant@careersourceflorida.com](mailto:agrant@careersourceflorida.com)

No phone calls please