

PY2024 Drop Out Recovery Subcontracts

Request for Proposal

Release Date: January 8, 2024

Proposals Due: February 7, 2024

This Request for Proposals (RFP) from the United Workforce Development Board (Career Link) seeks qualified organizations to deliver a Drop-Out Recovery Program targeting youth aged 16-24 who have dropped out of high school and face literacy or numeracy deficiencies. The program aims to increase participants' academic skills by at least one grade level annually, help them obtain a GED, and prepare them for employment, post-secondary education, or military service. Applicants are required to submit a comprehensive application, including a cover letter, detailed proposal, and budget. The program emphasizes a flexible, open-entry, open-exit model, with services delivered at designated locations within the eight-county region, and incorporates academic instruction, career exploration, soft skills training, and work experience. The proposal must clearly describe how each program element will be provided, the staffing plan, instructional materials, assessment methods, and timelines, ensuring services are non-duplicative of existing programs and aligned with federal and state performance standards. Incentives, including stipends and testing fee reimbursements, will motivate progress, with payments made directly to youth. The program encourages partnerships with local employers for work-based learning opportunities, including work experience and on-the-job training, with contractual arrangements established through Career Link. Optional components such as ICAPS high-growth sector training are encouraged, with prior approval. Applicants must demonstrate capacity for effective communication, ongoing follow-up for at least one-year post-completion, and adherence to equal opportunity and non-discrimination laws. The funding, capped at \$200,000 for the initial contract year, covers personnel, instructional supplies, incentives, and operational costs, with detailed budget documentation required. Contracts will be awarded based on a review and scoring process, with an emphasis on cost-effectiveness and regional service coverage, and may be renewed for up to three years if mutually agreed. The process underscores accountability, compliance, and collaboration to re-engage disconnected youth, improve their skills, and support their successful transition into careers or further education, thereby strengthening the regional workforce.

List of Entities Submitting Bids/Proposals

- Black Hawk College
- Heartland Community College
- Illinois Central College
- Peoria Park District
- Spoon River College
- YouthBuild McLean County

Abstract of Bids/Proposals

Black Hawk College

This proposal outlines a comprehensive Drop-Out Recovery Program at Black Hawk College. The program integrates GED preparation, literacy/numeracy skill development, career exploration, work

readiness, and job search techniques. The program employs research-based instructional methods at the Community Education Center in Kewanee, and includes partnerships with local employers for work experiences and on-the-job training, enhancing transition to employment or further education. Incentives, such as stipends and transportation reimbursement, motivate participation, while ongoing follow-up ensures sustained progress. Program staff, experienced in serving at-risk youth, will coordinate closely with Career Link, ensuring individualized plans, effective communication, and compliance with federal and state regulations. The proposal emphasizes regional collaboration, addressing transportation barriers, and leveraging existing resources to support youth in overcoming academic, social, and economic barriers, ultimately fostering a skilled, workforce-ready youth population aligned with WIOA standards and regional economic needs.

Heartland Community College

This proposal seeks funding to implement a comprehensive Drop-Out Recovery Program at Heartland Community College, targeting youth aged 16-24. The program aims to improve literacy and numeracy by at least one grade level annually, facilitate GED attainment, and prepare participants for employment, post-secondary education, or the military. Delivered primarily on campus in Normal, Illinois, the program features managed enrollment, with classes running in fall and spring semesters, serving up to 30-40 students per year with a maximum of 15 students per class. Heartland's Adult Education department will deliver GED preparation, career exploration, work readiness, and job search skills, complemented by ICAPS integration for high-growth career pathways. The program emphasizes individualized transition planning, employer partnerships for work experience, and a robust incentive system to motivate progress, including tuition waivers for college entry. Staff will maintain frequent communication with Career Link, ensuring collaborative assessment, eligibility verification, and follow-up over a full year post-program. This initiative aims to re-engage out-of-school youth, enhance their academic and employment prospects, and support regional workforce development through a structured, outcome-driven approach.

Illinois Central College

This proposal seeks funding to support a Drop-Out Recovery Program administered by Illinois Central College (ICC), targeting out-of-school youth aged 16-24. The program aims to increase participants' reading and math levels by at least one grade annually, facilitate GED attainment, and prepare youth for employment, post-secondary education, or the military. Delivered primarily at ICC campuses in Peoria, East Peoria, and Pekin, the program will serve up to 20 students annually, with flexible entry and exit points aligned with the college's semester schedule. ICC's Adult Education department will provide GED preparation, career awareness, and soft skills instruction, integrated with ICC's online platforms and resources. The program emphasizes individualized transition planning, with partnerships for work experience and industry-recognized credentials, including ICAPS pathways in healthcare, manufacturing, and IT. Incentives, including vouchers, badges, and stipends, will motivate progress, while ICC's staff will maintain consistent communication with Career Link to ensure proper assessment, eligibility, and follow-up over a year post-completion. Overall, this initiative aims to re-engage disconnected youth, improve their academic and career prospects, and contribute to regional workforce development through a structured, outcome-oriented program that aligns with WIOA standards and local economic needs.

Peoria Park District

This proposal seeks funding to support the Moonlight Coalition for Adult Learning's Drop-Out Recovery Program in Peoria, Illinois, targeting youth and adults aged 17 and older who have dropped out of high

school and face literacy or numeracy barriers. The program's primary objectives are to increase literacy and math skills by at least one grade level annually, facilitate GED attainment, and prepare participants for employment or post-secondary education. Delivered at multiple community locations, including the Logan and Proctor Recreation Centers and Alpha Park Library, the program offers flexible, open-entry, open-exit classes that accommodate participants' schedules, with an anticipated completion period of 12-18 months. The program combines GED instruction, literacy and numeracy assessment, career exploration, soft skills development, and job search techniques, utilizing instructional materials such as GED practice tests, textbooks, and online resources. Additionally, it includes a work experience component where students gain part-time employment in local parks and recreation facilities. Incentives such as stipends, vouchers, and participation rewards motivate student progress and engagement, with payments made directly to students as they meet program milestones. The program emphasizes individualized support, with dedicated staff—including part-time tutors, job coaches, and transition specialists—working closely with students to develop career and educational pathways, facilitate employer connections, and ensure a smooth transition into employment or further education. Ongoing communication with Career Link is prioritized to coordinate assessments, eligibility, and follow-up activities, which extend for a full year post-program to support sustained success. The budget includes staff salaries, instructional resources, incentives, and operational costs, emphasizing cost-effectiveness and regional reach. Overall, this initiative aims to re-engage out-of-school youth and adults, improve their academic and employability skills, and support their transition into sustainable careers or post-secondary training, thereby strengthening the regional workforce and economic health.

Spoon River College

This proposal seeks funding to implement Spoon River College's Drop-Out Recovery Program, targeting youth and young adults aged 16-24 who have dropped out of high school and face literacy or numeracy challenges. The program's primary goals are to increase literacy and math skills by at least one grade level annually, facilitate the attainment of a GED, and prepare participants for employment or post-secondary education. Delivered at Spoon River College's Canton and Havana campuses, the program offers flexible, open-entry, open-exit courses in GED preparation, career exploration, and soft skills development, with an anticipated completion within 12-18 months. The program emphasizes individualized case management, with dedicated staff—including advisors, instructors, and administrative support—working to support participants in reaching their educational and career goals. Instructional materials include textbooks, online curricula, and assessments such as CASAS and TABE, supplemented by web-based modules on career exploration and life skills. Participants will also benefit from work experience opportunities, with potential for part-time employment at local organizations, fostering real-world skills and connections. Incentives, including stipends and testing fee reimbursements, will motivate progress and are payable directly to participants upon achievement of milestones. An optional ICAPS pathway in healthcare and other sectors will be incorporated to support high-growth career fields. The program will maintain ongoing communication with Career Link for assessment, eligibility verification, and follow-up activities, which extend for at least one-year post-program to ensure long-term success. The budget incorporates staffing, instructional supplies, incentives, and operational costs, with additional funding from other sources covering instructional materials and program support. Overall, this initiative aims to re-engage out-of-school youth, enhance their academic and employability skills, and facilitate their successful transition into careers or post-secondary education, ultimately strengthening the regional workforce and economic vitality.

YouthBuild McLean County

This proposal seeks funds to support YouthBuild McLean County's Drop-Out Recovery Program, aimed at supporting 15 youth aged 16-24 who have dropped out of high school and face barriers such as trauma, underemployment, or involvement in at-risk behaviors. Building on over 30 years of experience, YouthBuild McLean County will deliver comprehensive services at its 75,000 sq. ft. facility, offering occupational skills training in Residential Construction, Healthcare, and Information Technology, alongside GED preparation, career exploration, soft skills development, and work experience opportunities. The program's flexible, year-round schedule incorporates classroom instruction, industry-recognized credentialing, real-work site training, and post-program follow-up, emphasizing pathways into employment or post-secondary education. Staff—including certified teachers, vocational instructors, case managers, and support personnel—will work to ensure individualized success, with a focus on building skills aligned with local labor market needs and fostering meaningful community engagement. The program will incorporate industry partnerships for work-based learning, leverage existing youth development networks, and utilize proven assessment tools like TABE and CASAS to track measurable skills gains. Incentives—including stipends, testing fee reimbursements, and transportation support—will motivate participant progress, with payments made directly to youth. Clear communication and collaboration with Career Link are prioritized for eligibility verification, progress monitoring, and follow-up activities extending a full year post-completion. Budget allocations cover staffing, instructional materials, industry credentials, and participant incentives, with expenses carefully tracked and reported via the organization's financial management system. Overall, this initiative aims to re-engage out-of-school youth by providing targeted education, vocational training, and supportive services that lead to sustainable careers, contributing to community safety and economic vitality in McLean County.

Selected Youth Providers

Selected Youth Providers	Total Awards	Duration of Contracts
Black Hawk College	\$66,724	Initial contract period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, with the option to extend two additional one-year periods.
Heartland Community College	\$60,080	Initial contract period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, with the option to extend two additional one-year periods.
Illinois Central College	\$20,000	Initial contract period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, with the option to extend two additional one-year periods.
Peoria Park District	\$180,000	Initial contract period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, with the option to extend two additional one-year periods.
Spoon River College	\$57,132	Initial contract period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, with the option to extend two additional one-year periods.