



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Young Professionals 2025 Initiative

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:
5:00 PM FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025

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A. Introduction:

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development (LEO-WD) is soliciting proposals for funding to support employment preparation and placement programming for young adults throughout the state.

The purpose of the Young Professionals initiative is to increase career awareness and preparation while reducing youth unemployment. This will be accomplished by introducing under-represented young adults, ages 14 to 24 years old, to the world of work while providing participants and their families with income. Combined services will place young adults on the right path to gain the skills necessary to achieve lifelong economic self-sufficiency.

Local programs will provide career preparation, employment opportunities and supportive services in partnership with American Job Centers and under the direction of local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). Business Service Teams will play a crucial role in recruitment of employers, with a focus on key regionally in-demand industries, such as Information Technology, Construction, Healthcare, and Manufacturing. Potential employer partners include those that have hosted Talent Tours or who participated in career exploration and experience events, such as Manufacturing Month or Careers in Energy Week. Virtual activities and placements are allowable, when necessary.

B. Background

Michigan aligns with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in support of an increased focus on work experience for young persons and envisions a public-private partnership designed to reduce youth unemployment by introducing youth and young adults facing barriers to success in the labor market to the world of work while providing participants and their families with income. LEO-WD has identified WIOA Statewide Activities funding to support this initiative.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national youth unemployment rate is 9.8 percent. The unemployment rate for Michigan youth ages 16 to 24 years old is 11.6 percent, down from its near-series rate high of 19.4 percent in 2020. Compared to all 50 states, the 2024 annual average youth jobless rate in Michigan is the ninth highest, among the seasonally adjusted unemployment rates. While youth joblessness has moderated, the rate continues to be more than double the state's overall unemployment rate of 4.7 percent. Research shows that being disconnected from work and school, as a young person, has long-term consequences; it's associated with lower earnings, less education, worse health, and even less happiness in later adulthood (Measure of America, 2024).

LEO-WD envisions the Young Professionals initiative as a vehicle to engage Michigan's youth and young adults, age 14 to 24 years old, in the world of work by meeting them where they are in their career journey, reducing barriers, and increasing opportunities for success in the labor market.

C. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs)/local WDBs.

Please Note: MWA subcontractors are not eligible respondents.

D. Funds Available

The total funding available for this initiative is \$3,000,000. Successful applicants will receive awards up to \$250,000 in WIOA Statewide Activities funding to support the development and/or enhancement of an existing Young Professionals employment program.

Funding is subject to a 10 percent limitation for local administration. Unexpended funding will be recaptured following February 28, 2026.

E. Funding Considerations

All individuals served with this funding must be eligible for the WIOA Youth, Adult, or Dislocated Worker (DW) programs. Individuals who are 14 to 17 years old may be enrolled solely as WIOA Youth or DW, or co-enrolled in both programs. Individuals who are 18 years and older may be solely enrolled or co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult, DW and Youth programs. Co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth program is not required. Funding priority will be given to programs targeting young adults with significant barriers to succeed in the labor market. When enrolled in the WIOA Adult program, these individuals may contribute to the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL's) vision of serving prioritized populations, per Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 07-20. Local areas may use up to 10 percent of their Young Professionals grant allotments for transitional jobs.

Per waiver authority granted by the USDOL, local areas are subject to a minimum 50 percent Out-of-School Youth (OSY) expenditure requirement for the Appropriation Year 2024 WIOA Statewide Activities funding awarded through this initiative.

When a young adult is enrolled in the WIOA Youth program as an In-School Youth or OSY, they maintain that designation throughout their participation, regardless of any change in enrollment status in education.

F. Allowable Expenses

The Young Professionals Initiative is not limited to the work experience activity defined at 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 681.600. Additional activities that support career exploration and preparedness may be funded under the initiative and must be recorded under the appropriate activities in the One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS). It is permissible to provide services in a virtual capacity, if necessary.

Although not an exhaustive list, examples of allowable expenditures of funding awarded through this initiative include:

- Wages/stipends paid for participation in a work experience
- Stipends paid for participation in career exploration or career preparedness activities
- Staff time working to identify and develop a work experience opportunity, including staff time spent working with employers to identify and develop the work experience
- Staff time working with employers to ensure a successful work experience, including staff time spent managing the work experience
- Staff time spent evaluating the work experience
- Participant work experience and/or related activities orientation sessions
- Employer work experience orientation sessions

- Classroom training or the required academic education component directly related to the work experience
- Incentive payments directly tied to the completion of work experience or classroom training for those enrolled as WIOA Youth
- Employability skills/job readiness training to prepare youth for a work experience
- Supportive services
- Volunteer and/or community service
- Short-term training required by, and linked directly to, current or near future openings with local employers
- Transitional jobs (Adults and DWs)

Stipends vs. Wages

A stipend is intended to defray expenses and support an individual while participating in a training or learning experience. Stipends may be used to support young adults who are participating in activities such as occupational skills training, job shadowing, and classroom (in-seat or virtual) activities, including career preparation or exploration. A wage is generally a payment of services rendered when an employer/employee relationship exists. Wages are usually paid through a payroll system. **If an MWA will be providing participant support for program participation with stipends, a local policy governing the use and limitations of stipends is required.**

Incentives

The 20 CFR Section 681.640 states that “incentive payments to youth participants are permitted for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences. The local program must have written policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives and must ensure that such incentive payments are tied to the goals of the specific program; outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments; align with the local program’s organizational policies; and are in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 CFR Part 200.”

Incentives are not allowable for the Adult and DW populations.

Wages, stipends and incentives are considered taxable income.

[Section 44 of the Michigan Employment Security Act](#) provides the definition of remuneration, which must be reported when certifying for unemployment benefits. Remuneration does not include stipends or incentives; therefore, they do not need to be reported.

Supportive Services

Supportive service rules and allowability under this initiative are consistent with guidance found within the WIOA Manual and TEGl 09-22.

Food: Per TEGl 09-22, food is an allowable cost for youth Employment and Training Administration (ETA) grant funds. Generally, grant funds from the ETA cannot be used to provide food assistance to individuals in the grantee’s community. On a limited basis and in certain situations, food at a reasonable cost may be provided to youth-serving program participants as a supportive service. Food may be provided to eligible youth when it will assist or enable the participant to participate in allowable youth program activities funded through one or more of our programs and to reach his/her employment and training goals, thereby achieving the program’s overall performance goals. The focus of the program is to train youth, and the use of grant funds

for food should be limited to reasonable and necessary purchases that are coordinated with other community, state, or federal services that provide food for low-income individuals. The State defines reasonable costs as those in accordance with Michigan's Department of Technology, Management and Budget's approved meal rates [here](#).

If using grant funds to purchase food, it is the responsibility of the local MWA to verify ETA guidance has remained consistent in approving this as an allowable cost as noted in TEGL 09-22.

Equipment: As outlined in TEGL 09-22, grant funds can be used to purchase supplies or equipment to assist in providing program services and training in a virtual setting. The definition of equipment is found at 2 CFR 200.33. The definition of supplies is found at 2 CFR 200.94. Laptops and tablets usually fall within the definition of supplies, which do not need grant officer approval. The Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200.302 and § 200.303 requires that all funds, property, and other assets be safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition. The grant recipient and its service providers must have sufficient internal controls and policies in place to account for all assets. Grant recipients should use safety precautions to protect personally identifiable information and use sound fiscal prudence to maximize the value of taxpayer dollars spent. Grantees should weigh the length of time remaining in the period of performance against the reasonable benefit to the program for purchases of new supplies or equipment.

If using grant funds to purchase equipment, it is the responsibility of the local MWA to verify ETA guidance has remained consistent in approving this as an allowable cost as outlined in TEGL 09-22.

Internet: Internet is an allowable supportive service. However, WIOA funding is always meant to be the last dollar, so if there are discounted or free programs, such as those for individuals who receive public assistance benefits, they must be utilized first.

If an MWA chooses to offer the above-mentioned supportive services, the local Supportive Services Policy must be updated to reflect this allowance. The policy must highlight that the food allowance is specific to youth-serving program participants.

Minor Work Permits

If an employer/employee relationship exists, a work permit is required for all minors. If the young adult is a minor when they begin a work experience, a copy of the minor's work permit must be placed in the participant file. Additional resources and information on child labor laws and youth employment standards in Michigan may be found [here](#).

G. Initiative Information

Service Design

Work experiences provide young adults with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. 20 CFR 681.600 defines work experience as "a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time." Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate. A work experience may take place in the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Work experience may take place virtually.

Transitional jobs are a way for WIOA Adults and DWs with barriers to employment, who are experiencing chronic unemployment or have an inconsistent work history, to develop a work history and basic skills essential to keeping a job. Transitional jobs are time-limited, subsidized employment in the public, private, or non-profit sectors. Transitional jobs must be combined with comprehensive career and supportive services.

Transitional jobs can be effective solutions for individuals to gain the necessary work experience that they would otherwise not be able to attain through training or On-the-Job Training (OJT). The goal is to establish a work history for the individual, demonstrate work success, and develop skills that lead to entry into unsubsidized employment. The difference between a transitional job and an OJT contract is that in a transitional job there is no expectation that the individual will continue his or her employment with the employer after the work experience is complete.

Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employer/employee relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), or applicable state law exists. Consistent with 20 CFR Section 680.840, funds provided for work experiences may not be used to, directly or indirectly, aid in the filling of a job opening that is vacant because the former occupant is on strike or is being locked out in the course of a labor dispute, or the filling of which is otherwise an issue in a labor dispute involving a work stoppage. Additional information on the employer/employee relationship may be found on the USDOL's Wage and Hour Division [website](#).

Although grant funding is not limited to provision of work experience, types of work experience recognized for funding under this grant include:

- 1) Employment opportunities
- 2) Pre-apprenticeship programs
- 3) Internships and job shadowing
- 4) OJT opportunities as defined in the WIOA Section 3(44) and in 20 CFR Section 680.700
- 5) Transitional jobs (Adult and DW population)

Pre-apprenticeship

As discussed in 20 CFR Section 681.480, pre-apprenticeship is a program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program, and includes the following elements: (a) training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the state or region involved; (b) access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services, directly or indirectly; (c) hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options, and understanding how the skills acquired through coursework can be applied toward a future career; (d) opportunity to attain at least one industry-recognized credential; and (e) a partnership with one or more RA programs that assists in placing individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship program in an RA.

Internships

Internships may take place in the private, for-profit sector; the non-profit sector; or the public sector. The appropriateness of an internship for a participant should be documented in the participant's Individual Service Strategy/Individual Employment Plan or case notes and should show a clear linkage between the internship and potential improvement in the participant's employability in a high-demand occupation and/or industry.

The USDOL has released a [Fact Sheet](#) regarding internship programs under the FLSA.

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a work experience option where young adults learn about a job by walking through the workday as a shadow to a competent worker. The job shadowing work experience is a temporary, unpaid exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest to the participant. Young adults witness firsthand the work environment, employability and occupational

skills in practice, the value of professional training, and potential career options. A job shadowing experience can be anywhere from a few hours to a day, to a week, or more.

Job shadowing is designed to increase career awareness, help model young adult behavior through examples and reinforce in the young adult, the link between academic classroom learning and occupational work requirements. It provides an opportunity for young adults to conduct short interviews with people in their prospective professions to learn more about those fields. Job shadowing can be thought of as an expanded informational interview. By experiencing a workplace first-hand, young adults can learn a great deal more about a career than through research in print publications and on the Internet.

Virtual job shadowing is permitted. However, participants must have the opportunity to interact with the employer(s) (i.e., not prerecorded). While participation in job shadows may not be supported by a wage due to a lack of a formal, ongoing employer-employee relationship, stipends may be used to support participating individuals if in alignment with local policy.

Partners

LEO-WD and WIOA emphasize collaboration and coordination between service partners and the use of all available resources, including non-WIOA funds, to meet young adult needs. The following entities should be engaged in the planning and implementation of programming, as possible:

- Wagner-Peyser: Provides recruitment, resume assistance, career preparation, and job fairs.
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services: Provides Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), career exploration and preparation, and accommodations. If the young adult qualifies for Pre-ETS, quality controls and programmatic considerations for case management and related documentation must be met.
- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP): Provides Pre-ETS to eligible students and Transition Services to eligible youth. Students and youth identified must have an open case to participate. BSBP offers disability education to local MWAs and employers, work-based learning experiences, job exploration, workplace readiness skills, postsecondary counseling, and self-advocacy.
- Mentor Michigan: Mentor Michigan supports more than 250 organizations around the state that are changing lives by matching mentors with young people.
- Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services: Administers the Foster Care Summer Youth Employment Program. Provides cross-referrals for recipients of public assistance.
- Jobs for Michigan's Graduates: Provides employability skills training and career exposure activities.
- WIOA Title II: Provides adult education and family literacy skills via connection to high school equivalency and completion programming. Source for recruitment and cross-referrals.

H. Timeline

Proposals must be submitted **via email by 5:00 PM on January 24, 2025.**

Contact and Submission Address: LEO-TSDIV@michigan.gov

The following schedule is for informational purposes only. This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of LEO-WD.

DATE	ACTIVITY
January 2, 2025	Request For Proposal (RFP) Released
January 24, 2025	Deadline for Application Submission to WD
February 20, 2025	Awards Announced
March 1, 2025 – February 28, 2026	Grant Period for Funded Activities

I. Performance Metrics

Young Professionals employment programs must provide outcome metrics following program completion as detailed below:

- Number of young adults who participated in the Young Professionals 2024 Initiative. This number will be compared to the number of individuals with the Young Professionals 2024 indicator selected in OSMIS.
- Number of young adults who received workforce preparation services, not including work experiences. Workforce preparation services help individuals acquire a combination of basic academic, critical thinking, digital literacy and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into employment.
- Number of young adults who entered a work experience as a planned, structured learning experience that took place in a workplace for a limited period, which may have been paid or unpaid. A work experience may take place in the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector, examples include summer employment opportunities or other employment opportunities throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and OJT.
- Number of young adults who completed their work experience.
- Number of participating employers.
- Description of the service delivery model used.
- Description of how program activities resulted in desired outcomes appropriate for the target population.
- Description of how financial literacy was incorporated into work experiences, including assistance with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for those who are approaching postsecondary enrollment.
- Description of how the program was used to inform young adults of local labor market information, including how their work experience may be incorporated into a career pathway.

- Description of how the program supported Governor Whitmer’s statewide postsecondary education goal of 60 percent of Michigan residents completing a postsecondary certificate or degree by the year 2030.

Applicants must describe how they will track and achieve these metrics for their Young Professionals employment program. Selected awardees will be required to report on these items and any additional metrics as determined by WD at the conclusion of the grant period. The final report will be due on March 31, 2026.

J. Application Instructions

Part 1: PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Each section below shall be addressed in the detail necessary to provide reviewers with enough information to score your proposal. The Proposal Narrative, covering Sections I through VI below, is **limited to 10 pages using no smaller than 12-point font**.

The budget narrative (Part 2) is not included in the 10-page limit.

I. PROGRAM SUMMARY AND DESIGN

Summarize the overall design of your proposed program. Highlight the strengths of your proposal and how it will contribute to the overall goals of serving the WIOA-eligible young adults targeted by this RFP.

Describe how your proposal is based on evidence of success.

Outline a typical plan of service for the target population you propose to serve, including, but not limited to:

- The types of activities that will be provided on a weekly basis during the Young Professionals employment program;
- The number of hours young adults will participate in each activity you propose;
- The total contact hours you will have with a young adult on a weekly basis;
and
- The total number of participants the MWA plans to serve.

A schedule of events/activities can be submitted as an attachment to your proposal.

If you propose to sub-contract any services to another organization, describe which services will be provided and by whom, how you will manage and oversee those services, and how accountability will be ensured.

II. DEMONSTRATED SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE

Describe your organization’s experience in serving young adults, especially low-income and other vulnerable populations. Be specific about:

- The number of young adults who have participated in the Young Professionals 2024 Initiative to date. This number will be compared to the number of individuals with the Young Professionals indicator selected in OSMIS. Any projected discrepancies should be explained in detail.

- Experience in operating paid work experience programs as a part of the Young Professionals initiative, including prior years' Young Professionals initiative successes.
- Program Year 2023, Employment in 2nd and 4th Quarter performance outcomes and goals for WIOA Youth.
- Coordination and linkages with community organizations, economic development partners, and regional employers to provide such services.
- Service delivery under the Young Professionals 2024 initiative.
- Percent of original funding awarded under the Young Professionals 2024 initiative expended.

III. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT AND ADDITIONAL PARTNERS

Describe the projected number of:

- Employers the MWA will partner with as a part of this grant initiative. Identify employer partners by name, if available. This list does not exclude other future employer partners from engagement.
- Additional partners/organizations the MWA will partner with to leverage funding and resources.
 - Identify other partners by name, if available, and describe which resources will be leveraged. This list does not exclude other future partners from engagement.
 - Identify how collaborating with these partners supports the ability of the MWA to work with populations requiring unique supports or accommodations.

IV. OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Describe your organization's planned strategies to recruit young adults to participate in your Young Professionals initiative and partners with whom you will coordinate. When relevant, be specific regarding how and what methods you will use to recruit youth who have dropped out of school and/or your planned coordination efforts and connections with school departments, American Job Centers, WIOA Core Partners (Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.), Job Corps, Jobs for Michigan's Graduates, and other young adult programs.

Include total number of participants the MWA plan to serve with this grant.

Describe the planned number of young adults who will be provided with paid work experience, funded in whole or in part with this grant.

Describe the planned number of young adults who will be provided with career exploration and awareness activities, funded in whole or in part with this grant.

Include identification of specifically targeted cities or towns, if applicable.

V. OUTCOMES

Describe how program activities will result in desired outcomes that are appropriate for the target population.

Describe how financial literacy will be incorporated into work experiences, including assistance with the FAFSA for those who are approaching postsecondary enrollment.

Describe how your program will be used to inform young adults of local labor market information, including how their work experience may be incorporated into a career pathway.

Describe how your program will support Governor Whitmer's statewide postsecondary education goal of 60 percent of Michigan residents completing a postsecondary certificate or degree by the year 2030.

VI. SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Describe how your MWA will use this initiative to contribute to sustainable growth of young adult work experience programming in future years.

Part 2: PROPOSED BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (Not considered part of the ten [10] page narrative limit)

Please provide narrative explanations of your budgeted line-item expenses, as identified in Attachment A.

Levels of matching contributions that help to improve the cost effectiveness of your proposal will be looked upon favorably during the review process. In the narrative, we ask that you describe how your matching resources will help to leverage WIOA dollars and add to the overall sustainability of the initiative.

Examples of matches include in-kind staff time; space contributions; equipment contributions; and any other supporting expense related to the delivery of WIOA services for which you are not requesting grant funds.

K. Proposal Evaluation

Required Submission Documents:

- Completed Proposal Narrative
- Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative

Optional Submission Documents:

- Employer Letters of Commitment (Not included in 10-page limit) must minimally:
 - Be written on company letterhead or email communication that includes official title and company logo;
 - Be from high-growth, high-demand industries;
 - Include a commitment by the employer to participate in the Young Professionals initiative; and
 - Identify specific resources being provided by the employer to support the initiative.

L. Review and Selection:

Proposals will be reviewed by a diverse team of workforce development staff.

Proposals Scoring Criteria – There are a total of 100 points possible for proposals. The following details points available for each section of the proposal.

Section	Total Points Available
I. Program Summary and Design	Up to 20 points
II. Demonstrated Successful Performance	Up to 20 points
III. Employer Engagement	Up to 10 points
IV. Additional Partners	Up to 10 points
V. Outreach and Recruitment Strategies	Up to 10 points
VI. Outcomes	Up to 10 points
VII. Sustainability Plan	Up to 5 points
Budget	Up to 10 points
Budget Narrative	Up to 5 points

All budgets are negotiable and contingent upon grant award and availability of funds. Overall budget and anticipated leveraged resources available will be a deciding factor in project consideration, as well as adherence to the criteria as presented in this RFP.