

**Fresno County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)
2025 Request for Proposals (RFP) for Staffing Agency Services OR Job Placement Services**

Project Title: Central Valley Social Enterprise Employment Network

RFP Number: RFP25-01

Issue Date: Friday, August 1, 2025

Proposal Due Date: August 29, 2025, by 5:00 PM (PT)

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Part 1: Introduction

Introduction and Program Summary

The Economic Development Corporation Serving Fresno County (“FCEDC”) invites proposals from qualified and experienced organizations (such as staffing agencies or workforce development intermediaries) to provide comprehensive job placement and retention services, including HR and administrative management for at least 80 individuals who are transitioning from positions with Employment Social Enterprises (ESEs) into good, “next step” jobs. Adapting and building upon the temp-to-hire model, the awarded Contractor or Contractors will serve as the employer-of-record for approximately three months of fully subsidized work¹ with the goal of transitioning participants into full-time, unsubsidized employment at those same companies (preferred) or immediately thereafter at other companies in similar occupations.

The selected Contractor(s) will be responsible for recruiting host employers and serving as the employer-of-record for participants (handling payroll and timekeeping, applicable benefits and insurance, etc.) during approximately 12 weeks of transitional employment. FCEDC anticipates awarding a total of approximately \$1.2 million for a period of 12-18 months to accomplish these goals². FCEDC may award a single contract or multiple contracts under this RFP, depending on the proposals received, applicant industry focus and experience, geographic coverage, and the best interests of the program. Respondents are encouraged to submit a proposal that best matches their expertise and alignment with this funding notice. Respondents may also provide an addendum to their proposal that outlines how they would participate at a reduced scale with more heightened focus on specific industries, geographies, and similar focus areas. FCEDC reserves the right to not award a contract or contracts under this RFP if in its sole discretion the respondents did not provide sufficient evidence of qualifications, experience, and alignment with the project.

The target industries for placements include Professional & Financial Services³, Transportation, Distribution & Logistics, Manufacturing, and Building & Construction. Placements in other industries would be permissible but would not be prioritized due to constraints with funding.

Background

About FCEDC: Founded in 1981, the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation (FCEDC) is a non-profit dedicated to fostering economic growth and development within our community. We work with local and prospective businesses, government agencies, and community organizations to create a thriving economic environment.

¹ Wages will be subsidized on a reimbursement basis upon approvals and meeting eligibility criteria. The respondent should consider these wages within their cost proposal as well as all other related costs. See the example Budget Narrative later in this RFP.

² Through budget modifications, the total amount expended through these services may exceed \$1.2 million.

³ This can include Office Administrative or Clerical work and may occur in settings such as but not limited to small businesses, medical offices, large companies, etc.

About the Good Jobs Challenge: This initiative aims to expand access to quality jobs for Central Valley residents by strengthening the region's workforce development ecosystem. As the System-Lead entity, FCEDC coordinates with subcontracted organizations to develop employer-led training programs in the target industries listed above. The initiative focuses on upskilling job seekers and workers, ensuring alignment with industry needs, and fostering sustainable career pathways. The project emphasizes strong partnerships with businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations to build a skilled talent pipeline and drive regional economic growth.

About Employment Social Enterprises: ESEs are mission-driven businesses that generate revenue through the sale of goods or services, with their primary purpose being to create jobs and provide support for individuals facing significant barriers to employment. Unlike traditional charities that rely solely on donations or grants, ESEs operate as financially self-sustaining businesses, reinvesting their profits back into their social mission.

About the Funding Source: The funding for this Request for Proposals (RFP) is provided through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult program, specifically via a Governor's Discretionary Allocation. WIOA is landmark federal legislation designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help Americans, including those with significant barriers to employment, access high-quality jobs and careers, and help employers hire and retain skilled workers. The Governor's Discretionary Allocation provides the State with flexibility to address specific workforce needs and priorities, enabling targeted investments in innovative strategies such as subsidized wage programs that facilitate on-the-job training and work experience for eligible adults. FCEDC will provide support to the contractor(s) selected by this RFP in the proper handling and reporting of WIOA funds.

Eligible Applicants: Experienced employment placement firms (i.e., “staffing agencies”) familiar with the temp-to-hire model are invited to apply for this opportunity. All interested firms must meet the following minimum qualifications and requirements to be considered as qualified respondents⁴:

- *Relevant Experience:* Demonstrated experience (ideally 3+ years) in staffing services acting as an employer-of-record for transitional and/or on-the-job training. Experience should include recruiting candidates, identifying suitable placements for candidates on an individual basis, and engaging employers in the Professional & Financial Services, Transportation, Distribution & Logistics, Manufacturing, Building & Construction. The service area for this proposal is Fresno, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties. Activities in other sectors are permissible but will not be prioritized due to constraints with funding. The respondents must identify which industries they propose to serve and their planned geographic service area.
- *Organizational Capacity:* Ability to serve as employer-of-record for program participants, which includes assessing applicants, onboarding, managing payroll, taxes, and benefits, and providing required insurance (e.g. workers’ compensation and general liability). The Contractor must have the infrastructure to quickly onboard participants and handle all HR compliance matters.
- *Employer Partnerships:* Established relationships with local or regional employers in the target industries. The Contractor should be able to show recent or current partnerships

⁴ Determining whether a respondent is qualified will be at the sole discretion of FCEDC.

with businesses that could serve as host employers, and an understanding of employers' talent needs in those sectors.

- *Financial and Administrative Capacity:* Sufficient financial stability and administrative systems to manage a contract of this size (potentially \$1M-\$1.4M) over 12-18 months. Respondents are welcome to propose services at a smaller contract value that are tailored to specific industries or regions. Fiscal and administrative systems must track expenses, provide timely reports on finances, record assessment and employment performance data, and comply with all state and federal contracting requirements.
- *Legal and Compliance:* Proper licensing to do business in the State of California and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The Contractor must not be debarred or prohibited from contracting with government entities and should have no conflicts of interest in delivering these services.

Proposers should provide evidence of the above qualifications in their proposal (see Submission Requirements section). FCEDC reserves the right to request additional information to verify a proposer's qualifications or to reject proposals that do not meet the minimum requirements at its sole discretion.

All requirements provided in this request for proposals are solely for the evaluation of applicants and in no way limit FCEDC's ability to modify the requirements and obligations of the awarded contractor(s).

RFP Timeline:

- August 1, 2025 – RFP Issued (publicly published and posted on FCEDC website).
- August 12, 2025 – Deadline for submitting questions/clarifications to the FCEDC.
- August 18, 2025 – FCEDC issues Q&A addendum (responses to all applicable questions) by posting Q&A addendum on FCEDC's RFP webpage.
- August 29, 2025 (5:00 PM) – Proposal Submission Deadline. All proposals must be received by FCEDC by this date and time.
- September 2025 – Announcement of "Intent to Award." Contract negotiation and execution. The Contractor will finalize scope and budget with the FCEDC, and FCEDC approvals will be obtained. The contract is expected to be signed by the end of August.
- September 15, 2025, to September 30, 2025, Anticipated services start date. The Contractor should be prepared to begin recruitment of employers and onboarding of referred participants immediately upon contract execution. An initial kickoff meeting with the FCEDC will be held in early or mid-September 2025.

All dates are subject to adjustment; any changes will be communicated to proposers via an addendum posted on FCEDC's RFP webpage.

Award decisions, including the determination not to contract with any of the respondents, will be at the sole discretion of FCEDC and will not be appealable. If a proposal is deemed to be noncompliant or is disqualified, FCEDC

Questions must be **submitted electronically** to czeit@fresnoedc.com with the subject line “RFP25-01 [Organization Name] Question(s)”. Questions will not be answered on an individual basis.

Part 2: Objectives & Scope of Work Objectives:

- **Secure 12 weeks of transitional / on-the-job training (OJT)⁵ for at least 80 participants in targeted industry sectors.**
- **At least 90% of transitional / OJT participants complete their 12-week placement.**
- **At least 75% of transitional / OJT participants remain employed with the employer of their initial placement in a similar or better role or are working with another employer in a similar or better role as their placement.**

Scope of Work: FCEDC has specific interests in the following services under this RFP.

Employer Recruitment & Placement: The Contractor, in partnership with the FCEDC, shall lead conversations with and recruit local employers to design transitional employment opportunities. The Contractor shall lead, with support from a designated representative of FCEDC as well as the Host Employers, the screening and placing of candidates and manage these placed participants during the 12-week transitional employment period. The Contractor shall assist the participants who complete their placements with job retention and/or job search services for at least one additional month. During that time, FCEDC’s designated representative will transition to the long-term primary point of contact for the participants to accomplish grant reporting requirements.

Task 1: Recruitment & Pre-Hiring Activities

- *Job matching* – Align candidates with roles based on skill, experience, and cultural fit.
- *Screening & interview prep* – Conduct initial assessments, resume reviews, mock interviews, and reference checks.
- *Interviews & skills testing* – Act as liaison between Host Business and candidates, including scheduling interviews and administering assessments (e.g., typing speed, software proficiency, trade skills, etc.) to evaluate candidate fit and contribute to placement training goals.
- *Feedback & development* – communicate hiring decisions and provide feedback to candidates, including behavioral and situational interview techniques.
- *Pre-Hiring Activities* – Conduct background checks, drug screening, work authorizations and employee onboarding (including technology) and ensure alignment with Host Employer requirements.

While there exists a cohort of Employment Social Enterprises (ESEs) partnering with this project, the selected contractor(s) will also be expected to identify and recruit support from other eligible ESEs to support the Objectives of the project and this RFP.

⁵ At times in this proposal, the terms “transitional” and “on-the-job training” are used interchangeably. Specific definitions for these roles will be established prior to the implementation of the project.

Task 2: HR & Administrative Activities

- *Employer of record (EOR)* – Take legal responsibility for employees, including all requirements such as payroll, taxes, insurance, and benefits administration during the 12-week transitional employment period.
- *Contractual* – Enter into a contract with Host Business, if required by the funding source (WIOA), for each transitional or on-the-job placement
- *Timekeeping and attendance tracking* – Work with Host Business to track hours worked for payroll and compliance.
- *Payroll processing* – Handle wage payments, withholdings, and reporting.
- *Tax compliance* – Managing all federal, state, and local tax filings (e.g., W-2s, 1099s).
- *Benefits administration* – Provide access to health insurance, paid leave, or retirement benefits as required by law.
- *Worker's compensation and liability insurance* – Cover staffing agency employees for on-the-job injuries and related claims.

Task 3: Program Management Reporting

- Conduct at least bi-weekly check-ins with participants during transitional employment.
- Support conversations with FCEDC, case managers, ESEs, Host Businesses, and other stakeholders, as needed.
- Report on participant progress, skills development, and other relevant information such as real or perceived barriers, attendance issues, performance issues, etc.
- Facilitate and support transition of participants to FCEDC designated representative and assist with documenting and reporting participant-level outcomes on job placement, retention, and earnings post-transitional employment.

Part 3: Proposal Submission Process & Requirements

Proposal Submission Instructions: All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the instructions below. Failure to follow these instructions may result in disqualification.

- 1) **Format:** Proposals should be clear and concise. The **Project Narrative** of the proposal should not exceed **10 pages** (single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins), not including attachments such as résumés, letters of support, or appendices. Please number the pages and organize the proposal following the sections outlined in Proposal Requirements.
- 2) **Submission Method:** Proposals must be **submitted electronically** as a PDF document. Email the proposal to czeitze@fresnoedc.com with the subject line “**RFP25-01 [Organization Name] Proposal**”. If the file is too large for email, provide a download link in the email.
- 3) **Deadline:** Proposals are due no later than **August 29, 2025, at 5:00 PM Pacific Time**. Late proposals will **not** be accepted. Proposers are encouraged to submit early to avoid technical issues. A confirmation email will be sent upon receipt of an electronic proposal if submitted during normal business hours. If submitted outside normal business hours, a confirmation email will be sent on the following workday.
- 4) **Proposal Validity:** Proposals must remain valid for **90 days** from the proposal’s due date. This allows FCEDC sufficient time for evaluation and award.
- 5) **Modification or Withdrawal:** Proposers may withdraw or modify their proposal in writing before the submission deadline. After the deadline, proposals cannot be altered or withdrawn.
- 6) **Proprietary Information:** If a proposal contains confidential or proprietary information, the proposer must clearly identify those portions. However, be aware that proposals may be subject to public disclosure under applicable law. FCEDC will attempt to protect legitimately confidential materials but makes no guarantees that information will be exempt from disclosure.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include the following sections and content. Proposers should use the section headings below to organize their responses for clarity and consistency in evaluation:

Cover Letter: A brief cover letter on the firm’s letterhead, signed by an authorized representative. The letter should include:

- a statement of interest in the project,
- an overview of the firm’s qualifications,
- a commitment that the proposal is valid for at least 90 days, and
- a commitment to meet the objectives of the project.
- confirm proper licensing to do business in the State of California.
- attest to compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, no debarment, and no apparent conflicts of interest.

The cover letter should also identify a primary contact person with contact information. This letter does not count on the page limit and will not be scored in the evaluation.

Project Narrative:

Organizational Background and Experience:

- Describe the organization's history, mission, and services.
- Describe how the organization meets the requirements for Eligible Applicants as discussed in this RFP.
- Highlight relevant experience delivering similar programs or services or organizational practices well-suited to be adapted to meet the **objectives** of this project and RFP.
- Include examples of successful projects or efforts, particularly those focused on individuals with barriers to employment and retention.
- Provide information on past performance, outcomes, and any experience in the service areas as identified above.
- Reference and summarize key details from accompanying letters of support.

Qualifications and Staffing:

- Identify the project director/manager and/or key staff who will be assigned to this project. Summarize their roles and qualifications. Include and specifically reference résumés for personnel as an attachment (résumés not counted toward Project Narrative page limit).
- Describe robust internal systems and the organization's capacity to manage all HR and payroll functions as Employer of Record. This includes efficient processes for applicant assessment, onboarding, payroll processing, tax compliance, and benefits administration, alongside other HR compliance matters. Confirm possession of all required insurance, including Workers' Compensation and General Liability, to ensure full coverage and compliance.
- Detail the capacity to quickly onboard participants and manage all applicable compliance matters efficiently and accurately.
- Demonstrate financial stability and administrative systems capable of managing a contract of the size identified in the Budget Narrative and Cost Proposal.
- Describe fiscal and administrative systems for tracking expenses, providing timely financial reports, recording assessment and employment performance data, and ensuring compliance with all state and federal contracting requirements.

Program Approach and Work Plan: Provide a narrative describing how your organization will carry out each component of the **Scope of Work**. The work plan should be as specific as possible, detailing the strategies, resources, methods, and timeline for accomplishing the tasks and deliverables in the **Scope of Work**. If you propose to use any innovative tools or partnerships, describe them. Identify any potential challenges and your plans to mitigate them. Clearly identify your target industries, occupations, and planned service area.

The Work Plan should address the following but may also include other innovative methods and approaches in alignment with the Scope of Work and Objectives of this RFP:

- **Frequent Check-ins:** Detail the structured approach for conducting frequent participant and Host Business check-ins focusing on progress, challenges, and participant success.
- **Stakeholder Coordination:** Describe the proactive support for conversations and coordination with FCEDC, case managers, ESEs, Host Businesses, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure holistic participant support and project success.
- **Comprehensive Progress Reporting:** Explain the methodology for systematically reporting on participant progress, skills development, and other critical information, including real or perceived barriers, attendance issues, and performance issues, ensuring timely communication to all relevant parties.
- **Transition & Outcome Reporting:** Outline the clear process for facilitating and supporting the smooth transition of participants to FCEDC's designated representative, and the robust system for documenting and reporting participant-level outcomes on job placement, retention, and earnings post-transitional employment, ensuring data integrity and compliance.
- **Achieving Objectives & Performance Measurement**
 - **A. Objective 1: Secure 12-Week Placements for 80+ Participants** (Note: you may propose to serve fewer participants focusing on some or all the target industry sectors and/or geographic service area. The cost proposal and budget should be reasonable compared to the placement goal for participants.)
 - **Recruitment Strategy:** Detail the robust participant recruitment pipeline and proactive employer engagement strategy to ensure a consistent flow of placements.
 - **Contingency Planning:** Outline strategies for addressing potential shortfalls in participant or employer recruitment.
 - **B. Objective 2: 90% Placement Completion Rate:**
 - **Support & Retention Strategies:** Describe the comprehensive support mechanisms (e.g., bi-weekly check-ins, conflict resolution, skill-building resources) designed to maximize participant success and completion of the 12-week placement.
 - **Early Intervention:** Explain the process for identifying and addressing participant barriers (attendance, performance, personal) through timely intervention and collaboration with FCEDC and case managers.
 - **C. Objective 3: 75% Retention/Re-employment Rate:**
 - **Post-Placement Services:** Detail the specific job retention counseling and/or targeted job search services provided for the additional month after placement completion.

- **FCEDC Transition:** Explain how the smooth transition to FCEDC's long-term point of contact will ensure sustained support and contribute to long-term employment outcomes.
- **Outcome Tracking:** Describe the rigorous methodology for tracking and reporting on job placement, retention, and earnings post-transitional employment to validate achievement of this objective.
- **D. Data Collection & Reporting Framework:** Reiterate commitment to a robust, data-driven approach for monitoring all program objectives, ensuring accurate and timely reporting as per FCEDC requirements.

Required Attachments

Cost Proposal

Provide a summary Cost Proposal that includes the total funding requested and a high-level breakdown of how funds will be used (personnel, wage subsidies, administration, etc.). The full budget detail and narrative explanation of costs should be provided as an appendix or separate section (see next section for requirements).

Budget Narrative

Provide a corresponding Budget Narrative matching the Cost Proposal based on the outline provided in the Appendix of this RFP. Alternative structures for the Budget Narrative (such as payments per transitional or OJT placement and/or payments for permanent hiring are also acceptable).

Employer Partnerships and Letters of Support:

Demonstrate your organization's relationships with employers, especially in the Professional & Financial Services, Transportation, Distribution & Logistics, Manufacturing, and/or Building & Construction sectors. Provide specific examples of employer partners that have hired participants in the past. Include letters of support from employer partners (on their company letterhead) as attachments. Letters from employers in the target industry sectors are strongly encouraged and should describe the nature and duration of your partnership with the employer as well as outcomes relevant to the objectives of this RFP. These letters will be reviewed as evidence of your established employer network and the strength of your partnerships. There are no limits to the number of letters that you can provide, however, proposals should emphasize quality employer relationships aligned to the proposal's objectives over the quantity of letters. Letters of support do not count toward the page limit of the proposal but should be referenced in this section.

Recommended Attachments

Resumes of Key Staff

Provide resumes of key staff identified in the Project Narrative. If an employee is not yet identified for a role, then provide that role's job description.

Optional Attachments

Workplan and Budget Addendum

The overall award for this grant will be approximately \$1.2 million, as discussed earlier. Respondents may propose to be the sole contractor. Respondents are encouraged to provide an addendum to their proposal outlining how they would conduct services if awarded a smaller portion of the total funding amount. This addendum, if provided, should include a high-level overview of the modified workplan they would perform in such circumstances and a high-level budget narrative that corresponds to this workplan.

Part 4. Evaluation Rubric and Process

Rubric

Required Item for Evaluation	Total Possible Points
Cover Letter (with all requirements)	Pass/Fail
Project Narrative: Organization Background and Experience	5 Points
Project Narrative: Qualifications and Staffing	5 Points
Project Narrative: Program Approach and Work Plan	20 Points
Cost Proposal	Pass/Fail
Budget Narrative (Includes cost competitiveness)	10 Points
Employer Letters of Support	10 Points

Selection Process

All qualified proposals will be evaluated by at least three individual reviewers based on the rubric provided above and the requirements of this RFP. The timeline, referenced above, indicates the anticipated review period, however, FCEDC reserves the right to extend the review period at its sole discretion.

Disqualifications: Proposals that do not meet the mandatory or minimum requirements outlined in this RFP may, at the sole discretion of FCEDC, be deemed non-responsive and disqualified from further consideration. While every effort should be made to submit a complete and accurate proposal, FCEDC reserves the right to waive minor irregularities or accept clarification or allow for minor deficiencies to be remedied (“curing”) in cases where, in its judgment, such action serves the best interests of the program and does not provide a material unfair advantage to any applicant. However, FCEDC is under no obligation to make such waivers or request clarifications / curing of proposals. FCEDC may not notify respondents that their proposal has been disqualified and will refrain from responding to requests for updates on specific proposals or the process in general.

Curing of Proposals: If a proposal contains minor clerical errors, omissions of non-material information, or readily correctable deficiencies, FCEDC may, at its sole discretion, issue a request for clarification or provide an opportunity for the applicant to cure such deficiencies within a specified timeframe. This curing opportunity will only be extended if, in the judgment of FCEDC, the error or omission does not fundamentally alter the proposal's content, is not indicative of a lack of due diligence, and providing such an opportunity is deemed fair to all applicants and serves the objectives of this funding program. Failure to respond to a request for clarification or cure within the specified timeframe may result in the disqualification of the proposal. **Applicants should be aware that FCEDC is under no obligation to offer a curing period for any deficiencies, regardless of their nature, and may elect to waive this process at its sole discretion.**

Clarification/Information Requests: FCEDC reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from any applicant regarding their proposal at any point during the review process. This may include, but is not limited to, requests for verification of financial data, project timelines, or organizational capacity. Failure to provide requested information in a timely and complete manner may result in the disqualification of the proposal.

Review: All accepted proposals will be reviewed according to the above rubric. While price is one factor for award, it is not the sole consideration. FCEDC reserves the right to negotiate pricing and contract terms. FCEDC reserves the right to reject all proposals at its sole discretion and/or invite other proposals using this same evaluation framework if in FCEDC's sole discretion the proposals received are inadequate.

Budget Narrative Example Template

This template is provided as an example only. **Not all costs are required and the specific breakdown of some categories, such as personnel roles and responsibilities, may differ from proposal to proposal.** This example template is intended to illustrate a high-quality response that allows reviewers to follow the costs across categories and activities to understand the Cost Proposal and supports the Work Plan of the Project Narrative. Alternative budget narratives that include such expenses as “Mark ups” on each placement with or without personnel, fringe, etc., are acceptable. These alternative budget narratives should nonetheless be clear enough to compare with other proposals, support the strategies contained in the project narrative, and include justifications as defined below.

I. Personnel Costs

This section outlines the salaries and wages for all personnel directly involved in the execution of the proposed project. All Personnel roles should include descriptions of their duties as it pertains to the proposal and the RFP’s objectives. The respective wages and estimated hours or percentage allocation on the project should be identified. Example positions include but are not limited to:

- **A. Project Management & Oversight**
- **B. Recruitment & Placement Team**
- **C. HR & Administrative Support (EOR Functions)**
- **D. Participant Support & Retention**

II. Personnel Fringe Benefits

This section details the costs associated with each employee’s benefits for the respondent’s organization alone; these costs may be broken down by specific expense or calculated as a percentage of total personnel costs or as direct costs per employee.

- **A. Mandatory Benefits**
- **B. Optional/Provided Benefits**

III. Participant Wages & Associated Costs (Employer of Record - EOR)

This critical section covers the direct costs related to the 12-week transitional/OJT placements.

- **A. Participant Wages:**
 - Number of Participants:
 - Average Weekly Hours per Participant: [e.g., 30-40 hours]
 - Average Hourly Wage: [e.g., \$18.00/hour]

- Total Participant Wages (80 participants x 12 weeks x average hours x average wage):
[Total Cost]
- **B. Employer Payroll Taxes for Participants**
- **C. Worker's Compensation for Participants**
- **D. General Liability Insurance (for EOR activities)**
- **E. Benefits for Participants (if applicable and legally required)**

IV. Travel

Costs associated with necessary travel for program staff. Identify rates, estimated distance, etc.

- **A. Local Travel (e.g., Mileage Reimbursement):**

V. Equipment and Higher-Cost Supplies

Costs for new equipment necessary for program operations, if applicable.

- **A. Office Equipment and Supplies**
- **B. Software/Technology Licenses**

VI. Lower-Cost Supplies

Expendable items needed for program operations.

- **A. Office Supplies:** [e.g., Paper, Pens, Folders, Printer Ink/Toner]
- **B. Participant Support Supplies:** [e.g., Onboarding Kits, Training Materials, Interview Prep Handouts]

VII. Contractual / Vendor Services

Costs for services provided by third-party vendors or sub-recipients.

- **A. Background Check/Drug Screening Services:** [Vendor, Service Type, Estimated Volume, Unit Cost, Total Cost]
- **B. Skills Assessment Platform/Licensing:** [Vendor, Service Type, Total Cost]
- **C. Marketing/Outreach Services (for employer/participant recruitment):** [Total Cost]

VIII. Other Direct Costs

Any other costs directly attributable to the project that do not fit into the above categories.

- **A. Communication Costs:** [e.g., Dedicated phone lines, communication platforms]
- **B. Professional Development/Training for Staff:** [Total Cost]

IX. Total Project Cost

- **Total Direct Costs (Sum of Sections I-VII):** [Calculated Sum]
- **Grand Total Project Cost (Total Direct + Total Indirect):** [Calculated Sum]

Budget Justification Narrative (Accompanying the Template)

For each line item in the budget, a detailed justification should be provided, explaining:

- **Necessity:** Why is this cost essential for the successful execution of the project and achievement of objectives?
- **Calculation:** How was the cost derived (e.g., FTE, hourly rate, number of units, percentage)?
- **Reasonableness:** How is the cost reasonable and consistent with typical market rates or organizational policies?
- **Alignment:** How does this cost directly support the activities outlined in the Project Design & Methodology (Tasks 1, 2, 3) and contribute to meeting the program objectives (80 placements, 90% completion, 75% retention)?

Example Justification Snippet (for "Participant Wages"):

"Participant wages represent the largest direct cost and are fundamental to the program's success. This line item covers the wages for 80 participants over a 12-week (480-hour) transitional employment period. Based on an average hourly wage of \$16.00, this totals \$614,400 (80 participants * 480 hours/participant * \$16.00/hour). This wage rate is competitive for entry-level positions in the target industries within the service area, ensuring participant engagement and supporting the objective of securing and retaining participants in meaningful employment."