



Bidders
Request for Proposals
For
One-Stop Operator & Title I Career Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers

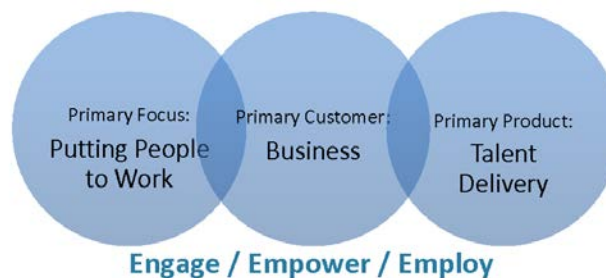
Program Year 2017

The Workforce Connection, Inc.
The Local Workforce Development Board serving Boone, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties in
Northern Illinois

Bidders
Arbor E&T, LLC dba ResCare Workforce Services
Kaiser Group Inc. dba Dynamic Workforce Development Solutions
National Able Network
Rock Valley College on behalf of: Rock Valley College Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois Illinois Department of Employment Security

Rescare Overview of Services

ResCare Workforce Services (RWS) is excited and prepared to offer NIWA our proposal to provide demand-driven innovative workforce services to adults and dislocated workers of Northern Illinois as their One-Stop operator. We will bring NIWA our evidence-based Talent Delivery Model, an integrated service delivery structure that provides a seamless system of optimized service delivery and proven outcomes. RWS has developed, piloted, and continuously improved our model over the last three years in preparation to align with the demand-driven approach of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Our customizable model was created to deliver a common customer pathway to provide an assembly of services to promote job preparation, job placement, job growth, and job retention in a demand-driven economy where businesses are looking for efficient ways to answer their own employment needs. We Put People to Work!



RWS is committed to, and has made a significant investment in, our “Putting People to Work” service delivery system, which consists of: **MOST ENGAGED LOCAL LEADERSHIP**- We recruit, engage, and train talented local workforce professionals to operate our programs. **SUPPORTED AND ALIGNED QUALITY**- Our 17-member Service Delivery Team is structured around and owns each of the elements of our service delivery system. This team of subject matter experts supports program design, technology implementation, innovation, employer relationships, and performance management and will assist The Workforce Connection to exceed both short-term and long-term goals. **WORLD CLASS JOB READINESS PROGRAMS**- We are the world leader in delivering a full continuum of job readiness education, skill enhancement, and career change tools and we will add value to NIWA through these programs. **CUTTING EDGE ENABLING TECHNOLOGY**- Whether using technology provided by our customers or our end-to-end customer management solution, ResCareWORCS, we manage all aspects of customer services, supportive services, and more by leveraging technological applications to achieve more effective and efficient outcomes. **UNMATCHED EMPLOYER BRIEFCASE** - We bring jobs to job seekers through a pre-built briefcase of national employers in industries such as healthcare, retail, security services, cargo handling, logistics, hotels, and food services; and we have a briefcase already prepared for The Workforce Connection. **INTENSE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**- We focus on key productivity metrics to drive our daily decisions. Performance is our culture, which we will instill as your One-Stop operator!

We have an established team of talent development professionals who have built positive relationships with education and training providers, the local business community, community organizations, public service agencies, and other local stakeholders. We bring a suite of tools and technology, discussed throughout our proposal, which enables our team to meet and exceed the expectations of our business customers and NIWA. These innovative tools are unique to RWS, and our team is trained to implement each to enhance services. Tools include: **ResCare Talent Market™**, **ResCare ResumePro™**, **ResCare Academy™**, **ResCare Career Pathways Explorer**, **GED Academy™**, **Roadmaps to Success®**, **Performance Tracking System (PTS)**, **ResCare WORCS™** and **Supply & Demand Portal**.

RWS is a leader in shifting the culture of workforce services to drive responsiveness to business needs. Business is our primary customer and our main product is talent delivery. In the markets we serve, we connect talent to opportunities, provide assistance with re-tooling the current workforce, aid in planning, and ensure a pipeline of qualified job seekers to meet immediate and future needs of business. We will use our 49 years of successful experience and knowledge to commit to servicing the Northern Illinois community in its workforce needs

Overview of Services to be Provided

The DWFS approach to workforce development views **business as the primary customer** of the One-Stop Centers, and our services are designed to support the success of NIWA businesses as they compete in an increasingly global marketplace. DWFS understands that WIOA fosters regional collaboration and is committed to investing local dollars in a model that meets WIOA regulations and has been perfected over the past three years, in anticipation of WIOA implementation. DWFS has met or communicated with numerous local economic development organizations, community partners, and employers, including United Way of Rock River Valley, Mercy Hospital, Transform Rockford Economy & Jobs Team, MPOWER, and Rockford Rescue Mission. We have studied your Regional and Local Strategic Plans. We have taken the information learned and designed our service model to improve staff knowledge of the workforce system, efficiency, effectiveness and overall value brought to the community at large. Our industry-leading **Industry Sector Model (ISM)** is tailored specifically to the needs of businesses and employers in the Northern Illinois Workforce Alliance (NIWA) region, with services designed around high-demand occupation sectors as defined by the Board. Unique to the ISM, businesses play a key role in identifying the relevant skills necessary for their workforce, so preparation of job seekers exceeds expectations. Our ISM supports NIWA Board priorities of increasing efforts to attract and retain workers who can fill the pipeline on in-demand occupations. The ISM trains career seekers to fit the niche needs of employers and increases the workforce participation rate through better job opportunities and education/training of unemployed and underemployed.

Our ISM begins with an outreach plan for both businesses and career seekers. At the heart of the model, we create communities that support the intersection of business needs and career seekers skills through the **NIWA Certified Job Seeker** designation. The ISM does not duplicate the siloed structure found with WIA programs. Instead it offers completely integrated services to universal, adult and dislocated workers as part of industry specific communities. Career seekers participate in an assessment that drives a custom training plan, specifically meeting the demands of each industry sector. Throughout their career path experience, job seekers learn and demonstrate skills valuable to local employers in advance of work based learning or an interview.



DWFS has been an ISO-certified company since 2001. Pending award, our NIWA operations will obtain local certification in 2018. We can commit to ISO certification and continuous improvement strategies as we are not affiliated within the community, and we are not on the approved training provider list. We are transparent and will exercise the neutrality required to succeed as your one stop operator. The DWFS commitment to transparency, accountability, and communication has helped us earn the trust of our Workforce Board customers. Our quality management system is integrated into every aspect of our operations to ensure that we are meeting and exceeding the expectations of our customers and our communities. By embracing meaningful quality monitoring systems, we have enjoyed an unbroken record of clean audit reports and accumulated less than \$55,000 of disallowed costs over our 37 years of operation.

DWFS has a long tradition of communicating a simple and fundamental vision to our employees: "Do the right thing for our customers and for our communities." The DWFS approach to providing workforce development services is based on our culture of **Extreme Customer Service** and continuous improvement. These are our distinguishing strengths. Extreme Customer Service is based on the DWFS Cornerstone behaviors of Relationship Building, Effective Communications, Solutions Driven, and Value Enhancement. These behaviors are the non-negotiable principles that define our corporate culture and are expected of every employee at every level of the organization. Our executive leadership team maintains close and respectful relationships with our board customers at each of our operations.

DWFS takes a **strengths-based** leadership approach to workforce services. Job seekers and staff can maximize their potential by focusing on building their strengths rather than concentrating on weaknesses. We invest in the strengths of our staff and our organization to support continuous improvement of all services.

The operational success attained by DWFS sets us apart from our competition. **Having met or exceeded over 98% of all contracted performance measures** across all of our workforce contracts nationwide during the last four years is an extraordinary accomplishment that speaks to our commitment to quality programs done right, especially significant in that we became the new provider in some previously failing projects. We will work with the NIWA Board to retain current staff and will provide a highly-qualified, human resources-focused Regional Director, Karen Burns (pending the recruitment of a permanent local Project Director), to elevate staff performance. We provide one of the best benefit packages in the industry, and our professional development program provides countless growth opportunities, resulting in our low turnover rate and a highly effective, committed staff.

The success of DWFS has been marked by fundamental beliefs and a continuing willingness to learn, grow and adapt. We are committed to eradicating solos within communities, and within the one-stop model. Our proposed solutions will

remove the barriers between One-Stop Operator and WIOA Operator, as all team members are working together to provide a more efficient, relevant system to employers and job seekers. We have invested significant corporate resources to ensure that our success can be evaluated, measured and documented. We use data-gathering, reporting, performance analysis, performance tracking, and quality improvement to create a uniform and rigorous process for evaluating progress across all of our projects, reported through a centralized performance scorecard. Attainment of all performance measures means that it is time to raise the bar. For DWFS, success means that all projects under our management are consistently meeting or exceeding stated performance measures, and core management activities are focused on supporting and maintaining this superior level of achievement. DWFS is ready to implement our transition plan and ensure the highest quality workforce program. The leadership and staff of DWFS know that our corporate values and history of productive Workforce Board relationships give us the ability to drive ever-improving services to the region's employers and career seekers, and serve as an engine of economic growth in the NIWA service area.

Rock River Training Corporation (RRT) will serve as a subcontractor to DWFS with key responsibilities in executing the Welcome Team functions for the ISM. RRT has served as fiscal and administrative entity for NIWA for ten years, and has a proven track record of conducting quality reviews, fiscal audits, technical support and training for staff over the course of their contract period as WIOA sub-recipients. In their history, RRT has been instrumental in keeping disallowed costs to zero dollars, and has served at the pleasure of the Board staff with positive outcomes. Under the proposed model, **RRT will no longer operate as a subrecipient** for NIWA WIOA funds, and has joined the DWFS partnership to run the Welcome Team. A successful Welcome Team understands the delicate balance of operating a "public-facing" business with exceptional customer service to employers and job seekers, understanding the technical components of the workforce business, navigating the vast needs of citizens seeking services, leveraging other community based services to support job seeker customers and contributing to the overall success of NIWA. This balance will be achieved through this partnership. DWFS will provide a 37-year proven track record of expertise and technical skills alongside RRT's 33 years of NIWA community-based work in removing barriers for people seeking employment.

National Able Network – Overview of Services to be provided:

Having the best tools and resources in place to navigate a complex, ethnically-diverse, economically-diverse, educationally diverse, *and not to mention expansive* service area is vital to ensure that all One-Stop, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Trade Adjustment Assistance customers have a vibrant and functional workforce development system in place. Middle-skill jobs account for 54 percent of Illinois' labor market, but only 43 percent of the state's workers are trained to the middle-skill level¹. National Able Network, Inc. (Able) is a leading non-profit organization serving most-in-need job seekers through innovative workforce development programming. Able's best-practice re-employment strategies provide clients with critical skills that help them in their current job search and throughout their participation in the workforce.

While not the whole solution, WIOA is a strong catalyst for entry into career pathways with family-sustaining wages for the thousands of job seekers served in this area each year. As key industries such as Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics continue to thrive across the service area, it is imperative that residents have access to career resources, like those offered through WIOA and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). The primary pillars of the service approach will include a strong alignment of business services efforts to drive regional economic growth through leading-edge career services for job seekers, a commitment to customer service excellence, a focus on cross-agency continuous quality improvement processes, and strong compliance practices which foster accountability and transparency among all stakeholders.

The success of job seeker customers is driven by workforce demand of employers. Under the functional supervision of the Northern Illinois Workforce Alliance Business Services team, Able looks forward to the opportunity to advance existing business engagement activities as well as elevating best-practices and showcasing excellent resources and talent pool available through the public workforce system. Keeping a finger to the pulse of trends, emerging needs, and consistently reinforcing the value proposition of the public workforce system is imperative for a high-functioning Business Services team. Coordination with stakeholders, including WIOA mandated partners, labor exchange services with the Wagner-Peyser Program, economic development agencies, employers, and community-based organizations is vital to ensure that a seamless service integration model is achieved.

One-stop operator services and career services for adults and dislocated workers described herein will extend both within and outside of the current one-stop and affiliate locations, creating a robust workforce system that reaches all corners of the service area. Able intends to offer leading-edge basic career services for all customers as well as individualized services for adults and dislocated workers, as determined under WIOA. This goal will be achieved in part through a strong interconnected network of partners. Partners will be selected based on a number of criteria and recruitment and enrollment objectives, including: geographic location in the area, accessibility to most-in-need populations such as veterans, individuals with disabilities, re-entry citizens, individuals with language barriers, adult learners or those with limited skills, and low-income individuals, among others. Utilizing mobile resources and the creation of a number of access points throughout the service area will also allow job seekers ease of access to vital career resources offered through the public workforce system. Customers will have access to a wide breadth of training opportunities that better position them for long-term career success including occupational skills training, connections to training that leads to industry credentials, and work experience opportunities such as on-the-job training, customized training, and more.

Continuity and accessibility to career resources also calls for a strong commitment to consistent messaging. To that end, Able is committed to supporting the outreach, public relations and branding efforts under The Workforce Connection brand name with Illinois workNet and a proud partner of the American Job Center Network.

¹ <http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/middle-skill-fact-sheets-2014/NSC-Illinois-MiddleSkillFS-2014.pdf>

RVC, Goodwill, IDES – Consortium

Overview of Services to be Provided:

The Consortium of Rock Valley College, Goodwill Industries of Northern Illinois, and the Illinois Department of Employment Security will provide integrated **One-Stop Operator Services** and **WIOA Title 1 Career Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers** with excellent customer-centered service and alignment of partners for the Northern Illinois Workforce Alliance's service delivery area of Boone, Winnebago, and Stephenson Counties. With the opportunities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for unprecedented collaboration, we are excited to partner with NIWA on combining these historically siloed services.

Rock Valley College (RVC) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) bring years of local experience in the existing One-Stop Operator consortium, while Goodwill brings both local experience providing career services for special populations and the tools and expertise of an international workforce development agency. This gives NIWA the best of both worlds – local knowledge coupled with national best practices. With IDES as part of the Consortium, we are proactively aligning our offerings with state services, such as Unemployment claims and its Illinois JobLink labor exchange services.

The Consortium is already assisting with the implementation of the WIOA Regional and Local Plans, including RVC and Goodwill's leading involvement in the Rockford Area Case Management initiative, which will guide needed case management certification and make more efficient use of workforce development and human service resources. We will use RACMI learnings to strengthen our own offerings.

We will make The Workforce Connection's three locations opportunity centers for job-seekers, employers, and partners. Instead of The Unemployment Office people go to as a last resort, we will be "The Employment Office" they go to as a first step. This includes extensive redesign of the physical facilities and a new customer flow with well-trained staff offering assistance at every turn. The Rockford, Belvidere, and Freeport locations will be utilized for community-centered programming driven by each county's specific workforce and employer needs. We will engage partners and Consortium staff on cross-agency teams that deliver coordinated services and refer to both WIOA and community services under the consistent banner and branding of The Workforce Connection. We are prepared and excited to meet or exceed upcoming statewide One-Stop Operator certification standards.

Building on Goodwill's organizational commitment to reducing barriers for individuals with disabilities, and RVC and IDES' long history serving special populations, we will also make our facilities opportunity centers for all groups of residents. We will not only be inclusive and accessible, but will provide workshops, partner services, and resources geared to the specific needs and opportunities of each customer.

Our collaboration won't end at our physical locations. We will work with community partners to develop access points for The Workforce Connection across the three-county area where customers can learn about our services, attend workshops and hiring events, and co-enroll in WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services. With The Workforce Connection's existing web of partners and our deep community relationships, we will promote the "No Wrong Door" concept that allows customers to reach us where they are. We will also use technological advancements to make every computer, tablet, and smart phone an access point.

We will drive increased utilization of WIOA and partner services through outreach to partners and other community groups, improved utilization of The Workforce Connection's website, media promotion of events and services, and development of success stories involving customers from different target

groups. The goal will be to flood the community with information about The Workforce Connection, for people of all groups in the three-county area to see it as a resource to begin or continue their career journey.

We will deliver high-quality Basic Career Services of basic assessments, career counseling, and job search resources job seekers need to start the next step of their career journey. We will be experts in both state-provided tools like Illinois JobLink and Illinois workNet and Goodwill's innovative GoodProspects website, featuring Virtual Mentoring for job-seekers to connect with an expert in the field they're interested in. Our Resource Areas will become known for their wealth of offerings that will draw customers beyond those seeking Unemployment services. Our partners will not only connect customers with their organization's services, but help with Basic Career Services and create an atmosphere that customers are surrounded by assistance and opportunity.

Our staff integration and service flow will help customers in need of WIOA individualized services be able to walk into our Resource Area and get enrolled in an Adult or Dislocated Worker program the same day. Thanks to the cross-functional teams we will put in place, enrolled customers will see helpful connections between Basic Career Services, the one-on-one attention of Career Planners, the job-matching of Business Services Coordinators, and labor exchange information knowledge of IDES staff. We will use a strengths-based case management system that guides a customer collaboratively into training, education, and employment opportunities that meet their interests, needs, and skills. The continuous improvement culture we instill in our staff will spread to our customers so they don't "train and go" but "train and continue." We will use the innovative ACT Career Ready 101 to strengthen customers' soft skills, technical skills, and workplace aptitudes, meeting evolving employer needs.

Our job-seeker services will be integrated with our business services, ensuring job-seekers are connected to jobs that fit their qualifications and employers get candidates that fit their needs. We will be active partners on The Workforce Connection's Business Services Teams and collaborate with other groups that work with employers so we augment, not duplicate, outreach and assistance efforts. Our Business Service Coordinators will go through Business U's innovative Business Engagement Boot Camp to bring best practices in engagement to our efforts. As with job-seekers, we will assess employers to understand their needs and specific situation, using a "pull model" that connects them with qualified candidates instead of a "push model" that sends them an unwieldy pool of options. Our use of Goodwill's Efforts to Outcomes CRM will provide better data across our integrated teams to coordinate how we work with business.

Because of our experience with the Regional Plan and with employers, we know the targeted industries and how to help implement sector-based strategies. We will collaborate with business and economic development groups and training providers to assist growing companies in areas like Belvidere's automotive cluster, Rockford's aerospace cluster, and Stephenson County's food processing cluster with customized programming to increase their pool of qualified workers. We will use sector-based hiring events and employer panels along with NIWA's innovative efforts like the Talent Pipeline Management Initiative.

As a Consortium, we are excited to already be involved in identifying and creating solutions for workforce needs. We look forward to the opportunity to accelerate and deepen our involvement and provide NIWA with the integrated, customer-driven services it is seeking.