



Request for Proposals (RFP)

Workforce Development Pipeline Program Contractor

Date of RFP Release: November 13, 2024

Proposals Due: November 27, 2024, 5:00 p.m. MST

Proposals shall be delivered to:

One emailed

sleavenworth@axishealthsystem.org

Questions may be submitted via email to the RFP contact listed above no later than November 22, 2024.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Introduction	2
Background	3
Project Goals.....	3
Project Scope	4
Budget	6
Timeline	6
Evaluation Criteria	6
Request for Proposal Guidelines.....	7
Proposal Format.....	7
Notification of Award.....	8
Contract Execution	9
Conclusion.....	9
ATTACHMENT A – Signature Form	10

Introduction

Axis Health System (Axis) is seeking proposals from qualified contractors to implement a comprehensive Healthcare Workforce Pipeline (HWP) Program supported by the Opportunity Now Colorado Grant Program, a Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) grant program. This initiative aims to address critical gaps in the healthcare workforce within rural Southwest Colorado by establishing work-based learning (WBL) programs, providing financial support for education pathways, and connecting talent with employers. This Request for Proposals (RFP) aims to solicit proposals from various candidate organizations, conduct a fair and extensive evaluation based on the criteria listed herein, and select the candidate able to deliver on the project successfully.

Background

Southwest Colorado's rural areas are currently facing a pressing shortage of healthcare workers at all levels. Simultaneously, there is a significant need for livable wage job opportunities for many people throughout the region struggling to make ends meet. Healthcare jobs can offer a stable income, rewarding benefits, and a fulfilling work environment, especially when coupled with educational and upskilling opportunities. Linking people looking to advance their careers with vacancies in the healthcare workforce can effectively address these challenges and support a thriving healthcare and local economic environment.

However, insufficient awareness about these job opportunities, unclear educational pathways, and lack of affordable or regional educational opportunities are some of the critical barriers standing in the way. We can bridge these gaps by guiding students, as early as high school, toward potential healthcare career opportunities.

Numerous organizations can link secondary students and non-traditional adult learners to various work-based learning opportunities, paving the way to job placement within the healthcare industry. Strategic partnerships between industry stakeholders and educational institutions could establish clear, direct routes to healthcare careers.

Additionally, providing comprehensive support to students embarking on their journey towards a healthcare career can enhance their chances of completing their programs and securing job placements. Once established in their roles, healthcare workers can further seek educational opportunities to upskill, leading to increased wages and an upward trajectory in their economic mobility.

Project Goals

- Develop a robust pipeline of healthcare workers to fill in-demand jobs in rural southwest Colorado.
- Establish partnerships between industry and education entities in southwest Colorado to connect the talent pipeline to the employer.
- Create a dental occupations education pathway in southwest Colorado.
- Create a support framework for people entering education programs to achieve job placement in healthcare occupations.

Project Scope The contractor selected for this project will accomplish the scope of work detailed below:

Deliverable #1: Establish Work-Based Learning Sites and Job Placement Pathways in Healthcare

Start Date: January 1, 2025

End Date: December 31, 2026

Services Description:

- Convene education partners to identify barriers to placing learners in work-based learning and internship experiences.
- Create a complete pathway that utilizes the stages of WBL (awareness, exploration, preparation, training) for the healthcare workforce.
- Collaborate with regional healthcare industry organizations to develop universal policies and procedures for WBL.
- Evaluate and improve placement processes based on feedback from education and industry organizations.
- Lead sustainability planning efforts.

Deliverable #2: Establish a Scholarship Program

Start Date: January 1, 2025

End Date: December 31, 2026

Services Description:

- Establish a scholarship fund for program participants wishing to complete qualified education programs in the healthcare industry and coordinate scholarship fund disbursement.

Deliverable #3: Connect the Talent Pipeline with the End Employer

Start Date: January 1, 2025

End Date: December 31, 2026

Services Description:

- Create pathways for high school and adult learners to healthcare education programs that result in job placement.

- Convene a consortium of at least three industry partners who will commit to participant internships and job placements.
- Identify talent pipeline and opportunity seekers.
- Place ten participants in work-based learning opportunities at Axis by December 31, 2026.
- Facilitate the placement in jobs and/or upskilling of 75 people by December 31, 2025, and a total of 150 by December 31, 2026.

Deliverable #4: Create a Framework for Program Evaluation

Start Date: January 1, 2025

End Date: December 31, 2026

Services Description:

- Track data from participants, industry partners, and education partners to inform improvements.
- Create and implement continuous improvement plans in response to stakeholder data.

Deliverable #5: Coordinate Wraparound Support for Program Participants

Start Date: January 1, 2025

End Date: December 31, 2026

Services Description:

- Offer program participant case management services to connect participants with wraparound support, scholarships, stipends, and paid internship opportunities.
- Ensure participants have at least one touchpoint related to access to resources.

Deliverable #6: Support the development of a Dental Assistant to Dental Hygiene Occupation Program

Start Date: January 1, 2025

End Date: December 31, 2026

Services Description:

- Work with education partners and Axis to develop a dental occupation pathway.

Budget

The total budget for this project is \$575,000. Proposals must provide a detailed breakdown and justification of budget allocation.

Timeline

All responses to this RFP are due no later than 5pm MST November 27, 2024. Any additional information will be shared with all bidders equally upon receipt.

Quotes will be evaluated from November 29, 2024, until December 6, 2024. During this one-week window, if additional information or discussions are needed with any bidders, the bidder(s) will be notified.

The selection decision will be made no later than December 9, 2024, and the selected contractor will be notified no later than December 11, 2024.

Upon notification, contract negotiations with the selected contractor will begin immediately and will be completed no later than December 31, 2024.

Notifications to bidders who were not selected will be completed by December 11, 2024.

Healthcare Workforce Pipeline Program Timeline

The project will commence on January 1, 2025, and conclude on December 31, 2026.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Overall quote suitability: proposed activities must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner.
- Demonstrated understanding of the project scope and specific tasks/deliverables.
- Detailed budget breakdown and justification within the \$575,000 range.
- Clear project timeline with milestones.
- Proven experience in executing similar projects.
- Quality and relevance of previous work and references.
- Capacity and capability to meet requirements, including necessary human resources.

- Sustainability and future impact of the proposed solution.

Request for Proposal Guidelines

Proposal Format

This Request for Proposal meets the open and competitive bidding process requirements. The items listed below shall be submitted with each proposal and shall be submitted in the order shown. Each section should be clearly labeled with numbered pages and no more than 15 pages, excluding attachments. Failure by the RFP respondent to include all listed items may result in the rejection of their proposal. RFP respondents who have not done business with Axis in the past may be sent additional vetting paperwork to be completed to ensure that the respondent qualifies under Axis' vetting process.

Important Note

If the RFP respondent submitting a proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the program's requirements, this must be clearly stated in the proposal, including the name and description of the organizations being contracted.

- **Cover Letter**

Provide a brief cover letter indicating your organization's understanding of the requirements of this project and ability to fulfill the requirements of the RFP. A person authorized to commit the organization to perform the work included in the proposal must sign the letter.

- **Company Profile**

Provide a profile describing the organization and include all the following:

- Organization name, history, and organizational structure (e.g., non-profit organization, partnership, Limited Liability Company, etc.)
- Organization address and Federal Tax Identification Number.
- The name, address, telephone, fax numbers, and e-mail address of the person(s) who will serve as the contact(s) to Axis regarding the RFP response and with authorization to make representations on behalf of and to bind the firm; and,
- Proof that the firm is in good standing in the state in which it's located and will have all necessary licenses, permits, certifications, approvals, and authorizations necessary to perform all its obligations in connection with this RFP.

- **Work Plan and Timeline**

RFP respondents are to provide a detailed work plan and timeline for the project and may use the deliverables outlined in this RFP as guidance. The plan should contain as much detail as necessary to explain the proposed approach fully.

- **Project Budget**

Provide a budget breakdown for the project showing how the budget supports project activities and deliverables. All costs must be itemized, and an explanation of all fees and expenses must be included.

- If the RFP respondent submitting a proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements contained herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposed budget. Additionally, all costs included in the budget must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work.

- **Staff and Organization Experience**, including experience meeting deliverables of Federal Grants (note the size of grants).

- **Project Team Qualifications**

Responses shall include a complete list of resumes (may be excluded from page total) for all key personnel associated with the RFP.

- **Communication Plan**

RFP respondents must provide a basic communication plan describing how they will enhance collaboration and maintain accountability during the project.

- **References**

RFP respondents must provide two references from companies or agencies to which they have provided similar services.

- **Signature Form:** (See Attachment A)

Notification of Award

Upon acceptance by Axis, the successful contractor will be notified of the award in writing by e-mail.

Contract Execution

The successful contractor shall commence work only after the contract is executed with Axis. A valid and enforceable contract exists when the parties fully execute an agreement. Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon the selection of the winning RFP respondent. All contractual terms and conditions will be reviewed by Axis' legal department and will include the scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items about the project.

Conclusion

We look forward to receiving your proposals and partnering with a dedicated contractor to make a meaningful impact on the healthcare workforce in rural Colorado.

Warm regards,

Sarada Leavenworth
Vice President of Strategic Initiatives
Axis Health System

ATTACHMENT A – Signature Form

(Please type or print clearly in ink only)

Organization legal name:

Signature:

Name (type/print):

Title:

Telephone:

Send Notification of Award to:

E-mail of Person Receiving Award Notification:

My signature certifies that the Proposal as submitted complies with all terms and conditions as set forth in this solicitation, except as noted herein. My signature also certifies that the accompanying proposal is not the result of, or affected by, any unlawful act of collusion with another person or company engaged in the same line of business or commerce. I hereby certify that I am authorized to sign as a representative for the organization:

Signature:

Date: