



## Request for Proposals (RFP) for Project Evaluation Heart of West Michigan United Way Kent County Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF)



**Issue Date:** March 5, 2018  
**Proposal Deadline:** March 16, 2018, 5:00 p.m.  
**Type of Contract:** The contract resulting from this RFP will be a fixed price contract

### **Background:**

The Kent County Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) was formed in 1982 as a response to the struggles facing Kent County residents in meeting their basic needs. The five areas of focus are Economic and Workforce Development, Food and Nutrition, Transportation, Energy Efficiency, and Housing (The Greater Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness). In 2015, the Kent County Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF), with funding support awarded by the W.K.Kellogg Foundation researched and analyzed data, and began building awareness throughout the community, around the disparities that exist in employment rates within the Neighborhoods of Focus in the City of Grand Rapids. In 2016, an action plan was developed to improve the workforce development system to best address the identified racial and ethnic disparities in employment and financial stability. The current project implements the action plan over a three-year period, with the goal of decreasing the unemployment rate in the Neighborhoods of Focus and increasing household income over the 200% of poverty mark, through an aligned and targeted workforce development system.

As reported during the planning phase, Community Research Institute and Grand Valley State University found significant disparities in the unemployment rates within the neighborhoods of focus (NOF) in the City of Grand Rapids. Overall, the unemployment rate for the time studied in Kent County was 8.9 percent and the City of Grand Rapids was 12 percent, compared to 17.3 percent in the NOF. When examining this data by race and ethnicity, it was clear that the disparity was significantly greater, with unemployment rates among African American residents and those of Hispanic origin in the neighborhoods of focus in excess of 30% for some census tracts. Further analysis of workforce development system services found that, though the local workforce development organizations have been assisting those in need of service most, programming does not fully meet the need.

During the three-year project implementation, community partners participating in the ENTF Economic & Workforce Development Subcommittee, along with businesses, local units of government, other systems' service providers and additional collective impact partners are utilizing the information gathered during the planning phase of the project to enact system level change, as measured by increasing the number of households earning incomes over 200% of federal poverty guidelines and address racial disparities in unemployment. Goals of the project include:

- The workforce development system will have a common definition of system success and an efficient way to measure it;
- The workforce development system will have a structure that can be communicated and marketed so that consumers and other service professionals understand how to access services;
- Workforce Development agencies will keep service information up to date on a public database;
- Workforce development system navigators will be consistently trained and have a process for ensuring clients are receiving services at the most appropriate organization;
- Employers will have a formal relationship with the ENTF and be aware of the WFD system;
- Engage the housing and transportation system; and

- Ensure equity is being addressed throughout all project strategies.

These goals are being addressed by focusing on five action areas, each with distinct steps to accomplish over the three years, and each with identified teams to complete the activities. These areas are:

- 'measuring system success,'
- 'communicating system resources,'
- 'engaging external systems,'
- 'best practices for system navigators,' and
- 'addressing economic stability disparities'.

ENTF is working with Inclusive Performance Strategies (IPS) as a partner in guiding activity, facilitating progress, and building capacity among the ENTf partner workforce development organizations to become self-sustaining in the work following the funded grant period. Additionally, ENTf is utilizing the expertise of Calvin College Center for Social Research (CSR) in the establishment of the initial data-sharing agreement and the capture and analysis of system-level data specific to the capacity and effectiveness of workforce development services across the county. With the established goals and objectives to direct the focus of efforts, ENTf and IPS are driving the action teams to effectively and efficiently accomplish the implementation steps to create a more impactful workforce development system, specifically for those experiencing the greatest employment disparities.

This Request for Proposals is to provide a process for evaluating the Kent County workforce development system to understand whether the ENTf workforce development partners are increasing impact and meeting the goals of the committee.

#### **Project Timeline:**

The current project timeline includes consultation to occur in April 2018 and evaluation work to occur January 2019 – September 2019.

#### **Scope of Work:**

- Establish the evaluation plan and framework, in partnership with ENTf Director, Inclusive Performance Strategies (IPS), and Calvin College Center for Social Research (CSR), that will help ENTf Economic and Workforce Development subcommittee gather data and test outcomes
- Review system structure and artifacts, including but not limited to ENTf Economic and Workforce Development project documents, strategies and action plans, and progress reports
- Review local and state data relevant to local workforce development outcomes, including but not limited to census data, employment and wage data, aggregated project-specific data (as available)
- Engage stakeholders through interviews, focus groups and surveys (stakeholders may include workforce development organizations, service clients, employers, training providers, and consultants, among others)
- Assist ENTf Economic and Workforce Development subcommittee, ENTf Director and consultants in determining how best to measure impact in future projects

#### **Deliverables:**

- Regular progress meetings (frequency to be determined)
- Recommendation for key types of data to collect and key outcomes to test for in that data

- Framework of data-gathering tools appropriate to the needs of the project (for example, standardized focus group/interview/survey questions)
- Preliminary report and discussion with ENTF Director, IPS, and CSR to review assumptions and initial findings and discuss adjustments before final report is completed
- Comprehensive report and presentation of workforce development system progress in meeting goals
- Separate executive summary of the evaluation for dissemination and external communication
- Electronic copies of all reports, protocols, instruments, interview schedules, on-line surveys, coding guides, data definitions, and any analysis outputs

**Qualifications:**

It is expected that applicants will:

- Establish a positive and facilitative partnership with ENTF Director, consultants, partners and system utilizers
- Demonstrate experience in developing and conducting systems-level project evaluation
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Kent County workforce development system
- Demonstrate knowledge and experience in the areas of systemic change and equitable outcomes and opportunities
- Demonstrate experience with project management
- Display ability to analyze data and prepare reports
- Display ability to commit to completing the work within the given timeframes

**Proposal Structure and Process:**

Responses to this RFP should include a detailed explanation of the activities to be undertaken to create the deliverables listed above. Proposals should also include a breakout of pricing per activity in the case that expectations must be adjusted to meet budgetary restrictions. Summaries or samples of previous related work and experience of evaluator/evaluation team that will be assigned to the project should also be included.

Questions regarding the RFP may be submitted by email to Wende Randall, ENTF Director, prior to 5:00p.m. Friday, March 9, 2018. Responses to questions will be posted on the ENTF website on March 12, 2018.

Proposals shall be submitted by 5:00p.m. on March 16, 2018. After initial review of proposals, and prior to final selection and notification, one or more proposers may be asked to participate in an interview.

**Additional Terms:**

- ENTF/HWMUW is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by a Bidder or any other person or entity in the preparation of their proposal.
- This RFP may be sent as a courtesy to known interested individuals and firms. The receipt of this RFP from ENTF in no way implies that the recipient is a qualified bidder.
- Any proposal submitted to ENTF/HWMUW is not confidential. All materials submitted become the property of ENTF/HWMUW. ENTF/HWMUW has the right to use any or all un-copyrighted concepts presented in any proposal. Approval or disapproval of a proposal does not affect this right.

**Compensation:**

Total contract not to exceed \$45,000.

**Submit cover letter and proposal by the deadline to:  
Wende Randall, Director ENTF [wrandall@hwmuw.org](mailto:wrandall@hwmuw.org)**