Request for Applications (RFA) for Out-of-School Youth (OSY)
WIA Year-Round Youth Programming
Questions & Answers

This document is intended to serve as a "Question & Answer" document for prospective applicants under the RFA for WIA Out-of-School Youth Year-Round programs.

The questions are presented in two sections. The first section includes questions submitted to the Grant Officer of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development on or before August 1, 2012. These questions and answers were circulated at an August 3 informational session for prospective respondents. The second section includes questions submitted during the August 3 information session. All written questions submitted with respect to the RFA are addressed in this document.

Section I. Questions Submitted by August 1, 2012

Introduction to Questions 1 - 4

RFA, p. 24, Section VII B. of the RFA, **Hybrid Performance-Based Structure for Grantee Payment**, states that:

> "Under this grant, performance measures are based on 100% enrollment. To that end, successful respondents will receive a percentage of their grant award via fixed price invoicing and fulfillment of enrollment targets on a monthly basis. The balance of the funds will be accessible upon the achievement of outcomes including credential attainment, education or employment placement, placement retention, and literacy/numeracy skills gains. "

Question 1

Q: The above-quoted language seems to say that the "fulfillment of enrollment targets" is part of the "base amount" of the grant, but the later example suggests that fulfillment of enrollment and retention targets are performance based. Which is it?

A: The base amount is intended to provide grantees with operational funding to support program activities throughout the grant period, while the performance-based targets are intended to promote and reward successful outcomes for participants. Both the base amount and performance-based targets must be based on proposed enrollment. Grantees do not need to propose or meet specific monthly enrollment targets in order to submit invoices for the base payments; however, failure to make reasonable and timely progress toward overall enrollment targets may result in technical assistance or other corrective action by the WIC and DOES.

The performance-based payment for "Enrollment & Program Retention" is based on achievement of both enrollment and retention targets as proposed by the grantee.

Question 2

Q; Since performance measures are based on "100% enrollment", does that mean that to receive full base price invoicing amounts based on fulfillment of the enrollment targets: 1) all participants must be enrolled the 1st month of the grant; or 2) if a proposal states that full enrollment will occur over a three

month period (1/3rd each month), can the grantee still obtain the full fixed payment for the first 2 months?

A: Base payments are based on the total proposed enrollment during the grant period, and are not dependent on the number of participants enrolled at any given time; therefore, a grantee would be eligible for the full fixed payment even if the grantee has not achieved 100 percent of target enrollment in a given month. However, as noted above, failure to make reasonable and timely progress toward enrollment goals may result in technical assistance or other corrective actions by the WIC and DOES.

Question 3

Q: If youth are successfully exited from the program prior to the 12th month of the grant period, does that mean that the base price invoicing amounts for subsequent months will be reduced to reflect the exited participants?

A: No. The base price is established according to the total number of youth to be served at any one point, and should be the same amount each month. However, program enrollment and retention allocations are to be invoiced on a per-person, pro-rated basis for each individual who was actively participating in the program during the month for which the invoice is submitted. As a result, the allocation for program enrollment and retention may vary based on the number of youth served in any given month and may be reduced to reflect exited participants or increased to reflect new enrollments.

Respondents are responsible for identifying appropriate entry and exit points as part of their overall program design as described in their application. Respondents who propose program models that are less than twelve months in duration, or who propose open-enrollment and open-exit policies as part of their program design, should clearly identify anticipated entry and exit points for program participants, and how the program will ensure that all participants will have adequate time to achieve anticipated outcomes and complete program activities within the grant period. Respondents will not be permitted to enroll participants in a manner that is inconsistent with the proposed program model.

For further information on invoicing of base and incentive payments, please see the "Invoicing" section on pp. 6-7 of this document.

Question 4

Q: Are the percentage allotments for the base and performance measures fixed or can grant proposals set the percentages? So, for example, is the fixed payment limited to 50% of the total award? What about the performance based parts of the payment structure?

A: The percentage allotments for the Base Amount and the Performance-Based Allotments are fixed. The fixed Hybrid Performance-Based Structure is as follows:

Base Amount	Performance-Based Allocation				
	Enrollment & Program Retention	Credential Attainment	Placement	Retention in Placement	Literacy/Numeracy Gains
50%	20%	10%	5%	5%	10%

Question 5 - Interim Participant Measures (RFA, p. 12-14.)

Q: Must an applicant report on one indicator for all five program areas regardless of program chosen, e.g., must an applicant select an indicator in work readiness and job search if applying for GED to college?

A: Yes, all applicants must report on at least one indicator for all five program areas. Please note that placement services enabling participants to obtain part-time or full-time employment during program participation is a required service under the GED to College model.

Question 6 - Target Youth and Number of Youth Served (RFA, p. 20)

Q: Applicants for GED to college must serve at least one cohort of 25 youth. If they want to serve more youth, must it be in multiples of 25, i.e., 50, 75, 100, etc.?

A: Respondents are asked to commit to serving at least one cohort of no more than twenty-five (25) youth per year as part of the GED to College program model. However, respondents may propose to serve more than one cohort of youth per year under the grant.

Question 7 - Cost Per Participant (RFA, p.24.)

Are incentives to be included in the budget? P. 24 suggests that they are, but #3 Budget Form on p. 42 states the budget will not include the youth payments. If incentives are to be included, would they be in the Base Amount or one of the other categories at the bottom of p. 24?

A: The budget form (detailed in Attachment e) reflects funds that will be received by the grantee under the grant; this will not include the youth incentive payments as these payments will be administered directly to participants by DOES. However, # 1. Budget Overview, on pg. 41 of 43, must include both the Operating Budget (detailed in Attachment e) and the Youth incentive/wage expense (Detailed in Attachment f), which will indicate the total cost per participant.

Question 8 - Application Attachments (RFA, p 43 & Attachment a)

Q: The sequence of documents and attachments should be as set forth in Attachment A, rather than the sequence on p. 43 of the RFP, correct?

A: Yes, follow the order of Attachment a.

Question 9- Certificates of Good Standing

Q: For Certificates of Good Standing from DCRA and OTR, how current must they be?

A: The Certificate of Good Standing must be dated no earlier than July 27, 2012, which was when the RFA was posted. Certification of Good Standing can be verified by Latoyia Hampton, DMPED Grant Officer, if the proper application in submitted with the application.

Section II. Questions Received During August 3 Information Session

CASAS (Literacy & Numeracy) questions

Q: CASAS does not have a grade level/correlation. How do we determine testing specific to 6 grade?

A: CASAS has developed a cross-walk scale that may be used to determine grade level for purposes of WIA Title I funded programs. The scale may be accessed at: https://www.casas.org/docs/wiaandnrs/casasnrs-grade-wiaI.pdf?sfvrsn=3?Status=Master.

For purposes of this RFA, participants will be considered 'basic skills deficient' if they achieve a CASAS score of 235 or below. Participants scoring at 220 or below on the CASAS scale are not eligible to be served under this grant, and should be referred to DOES for alternative services. Participants who have earned a secondary school diploma or GED do not need to receive a CASAS assessment, and are not counted toward the literacy and numeracy outcome measures required under this RFA.

Q: Will grantees be responsible for the CASAS testing or will DOES provide this assessment?
Q: Who provide literacy and numeracy testing?

A: For initial CASAS assessments, grantees have the option to refer potential participants to DOES, or administer such testing directly or through a partner organization. There is no charge to grantees for DOES-administered CASAS testing; if grantees intend to use grant funds under this RFA to administer CASAS testing, these costs should be incorporated in the budget submissions.

The respondent is responsible for administering all subsequent assessments to evaluate literacy and numeracy gains. Respondents should clearly identify how such assessments will be provided as part of the application.

Q: We use TABE (aligned with GED), not CASAS. Must we administer CASAS to participants?

In order to ensure consistency across programs, the WIC and DOES have determined that only CASAS scores may be used to determine youth eligibility. Applicants may refer prospective participants to DOES for initial CASAS assessments. These referrals will not be counted against grant funds.
Q: Will DOES offer an assessment in Spanish or must youth test at 6th grade literacy in English? (GED is offered in Spanish?)

A: Prospective participants must test at or above the 6th grade level on the CASAS scale. Prospective participants who do not test at these levels should be referred to DOES or other agencies to ensure that those individuals can be matched to alternative services.

Level of Service

Q: Are the participants stipends included in the $7,500 cost of participant?

A: All participants are eligible for a $30 per week transportation stipend, which will be administered directly by DOES to the participant. This stipend is not included in the $7,500 per participant cap, and need not be included as part of the application.

All participants must receive, or be eligible to receive, wage or incentive payments equal to no less than $1,000.00 over the course of program participation. Respondents must include a detailed description of the proposed wage or incentive structure as part of the application. Wages or incentive payments will be administered directly from DOES to participants, at the direction of the grantee. Any wages or incentive payments not earned by a participant shall be retained by DOES.

Q: Does a participant need to get 20 hours of services per week? 80% was mentioned at pre-bid. Which one is it?

A: Respondents must ensure that programs are designed in a manner that allows each participant to be directly engaged in program activities, such as training, work experience, or academic instruction, for a minimum of 20 hours per week. The 80 percent participation level is the minimum participation level required to meet interim performance measures for program retention. See section IV.B of the RFA for additional details on interim program measures.

Q: Can the minimum 20 hours requirement include weekend hours?
A: Yes. Programs may include activities during weekend hours. Applicants should clearly specify how weekend activities will be used as part of the overall program design.

Q: Does a youth have to remain in the program for 12 months? Or, could a youth go through a 6 month period then transition out to a job?

A: Individual participants are not required to participate in program activities for the full twelve months of the grant period. While the grant period covered by the RFA is twelve months, respondents are free to propose program models that last less than twelve months, so long as the program model provides sufficient time for youth to achieve desired outcomes, and to complete all program activities by the end of the grant period. For example, a respondent could propose a program model that serves two cohorts of participants for periods of six months each.

Youth participants who successfully transition to employment or post-secondary educational opportunities prior to the end of the grant period (regardless of program length) may be considered as having achieved a positive placement outcome if such placement is consistent with program design and student objectives. Please note that grantees are required to provide post-placement services for all participants for at least the twelve month period following the initial grant period, including maintaining regular contact with participants, maintaining data on participant progress, and offering any supportive services as needed to help participants better achieve their stated employment or post-secondary educational goals.

Funding

Q: How much money did the Department of Labor allocate to the District of Columbia to fund these grant awards?

A: The WIC and DOES are responsible for setting annual funding levels for WIA Youth grants in the District of Columbia, based on the availability of funding. As stated in the Notice of Funding Availability of July 20, 2012, the total amount that may be awarded under this RFA is $2.6 million. However, the WIC reserves the right to award less than the total amount available based on the number and quality of applications received.

Financial Audits

Q: Can IRS form 990 be submitted by a non-profit in lieu of an audit?

A: No. Applicants must submit both the IRS form 990 and the most recent audited financial statement.

Q: As a for-profit, we don't usually have audited financial statement, but we do have tax records. Is this accepted?

A: For a sole proprietor or for profit entities, include copies of the two (2) most recent year's federal income tax returns and the most recent year-end balance sheet and income statement. If no audited statements are available, provider must supply equivalent financial statements certified by provider to fairly and accurately reflect the provider's financial status.

Invoicing

Q: When and how often can we bill for the performance base incentive funding?

Q: Can you please give several concrete examples for how an organization would submit invoices for the incentive placement? For example, if the organization as a 3 month program, how would they bill for enrollment/retention? Would they divide the 20% payment by a third and bill for that amount for per participant?

A: Base payments may be invoiced on a monthly basis. For program enrollment and retention payments, the grantee may invoice on a per-capita basis for each month in which one or more participants is enrolled and achieves an 80 percent attendance record. Applicants may begin invoicing for performance-based payments on a per-capita basis starting with the first month in which one or more program participants achieve one of the goals outlined in section VII.B as a performance-based goal.

Example 1. Respondent proposes to offer a three month program that will serve four cohorts of twenty participants, for a total of 80 participants during the grant period. The respondent proposes a per-participant cost of $4,000 (excluding wages/incentives), with a base payment of $2,000 per participant.

During the first month of the grant period, the grantee enrolls 20 participants, and each of the 20 participants meet the 80 percent participation requirement. No other performance outcomes are met. For the first month, the respondent would be eligible to invoice for $4,666.66, based on:

- The monthly base payment of $3,333.33 (20 participants X $2,000, divided by 12 months) AND
- The enrollment and retention incentive payment of $1,333.33 (20 participants X $800, divided by twelve months.

Example 2. Same program model and facts described in Example 1.

During the second month of the grant period, the grantee has 15 participants meet the enrollment and retention goal, and has five participants achieve a literacy/numeracy gain goal. No other outcomes are achieved. For the second month, the grantee would be eligible to invoice for $6,333.33, based on:

- The monthly base payment of $3,333.33 (20 participants X $2,000, divided by 12)
- An enrollment and retention incentive of $1,000.00 (15 participants X $800, divided by twelve) AND
- A 10 percent literacy/numeracy gain incentive payment of $2,000 with respect to the five participants meeting this outcome (5 participants X $400)

Example 3. Same program model and facts as described above. The first cohort graduates at the end of month three, with 15 participants meeting the enrollment and retention goal, 15 participants achieving a positive placement outcome, 10 participants achieving a positive credential outcome, and 10 achieving

a literacy and numeracy gain. At the end of the third month, the program would be eligible to invoice for $15,333.33, based on:

- The monthly base payment of $3,333.33
- The enrollment and retentions incentive of $1,000
- A 5 percent placement incentive payment of $3,000 for the fifteen participants meeting the placement outcome (15 participants X $200)
- A 10 percent credential attainment incentive payment of $4,000 for the ten participants meeting the credential attainment outcome (10 participants X $400)
- A 10 percent literacy/numeracy gain incentive payment of $4,000 with respect to the 10 participants meeting this outcome (10 participants X $400)

Example 4. Same program model and facts as above. The second cohort of twenty participants is enrolled and participates in the three month program, achieving exactly the same results as with the first cohort. The respondent continues to monitor the progress of the first cohort, and documents that 10 of the 15 participants for that cohort have retained their placement. At the end of the sixth month, the program would be eligible to invoice for $17,333.33, based on:

- For the first cohort:
    - A five percent placement in retention incentive payment of $2,000 for the 10 participants meeting this outcome (10 participants X $200)

- For the second cohort
    - The monthly base payment of $3,333.33
    - The enrollment and retentions incentive of $1,000
    - A 5 percent placement incentive payment of $3,000 for the fifteen participants meeting the placement outcome (15 participants X $200)
    - A 10 percent credential attainment incentive payment of $4,000 for the ten participants meeting the credential attainment outcome (10 participants X $400)
    - A 10 percent literacy/numeracy gain incentive payment of $4,000 with respect to the 10 participants meeting this outcome (10 participants X $400)

Incentives

Q: Can incentive funds pay for GED testing?
A: No. Incentive/wage payments are direct payments to program participants for the performance of work or for the achievement of specific goals. Any program costs (including testing) should be paid for from funds received by the grantee, and should be included in the budget documentation submitted as part of the application.

Orientation

Q: Can the orientation have more than a 5 day trail?

A: No. The purpose of the five-day orientation period is to ensure that potential participants are a good fit for the program model, while at the same time ensuring that they are connected with appropriate services and activities in a timely fashion and with a minimum of disruption. Applicants must make a

determination on the participant following the required five-day orientation period, and refer any participants deemed not to be a good fit for the program to DOES for alternative placements.

Participants

Q: How many students are you expecting to serve?

A: The number of youth participants served will depend on the number and quality of applications received.

Q: Do participant still need background checks?

A: Youth participants are not required to undergo background checks to participate in the program.

All employees of the respondent who will be providing direct supervision to youth participants under the age of 18 years old will be required to obtain a criminal background clearance through the DC Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) prior to the start of the program. DOES will provide these clearances free of charge and will work with respondents to schedule an appointment.

Supervisors who have a valid clearance on file with MPD within the last two (2) years do not need to obtain a new clearance.

Q: Can you serve only 18 – 21?

A: Respondents may propose program models that serve subsets of the eligible participant population. The WIC will evaluate all proposals to ensure distribution of services among various populations of target youth described in the RFA.

Q: Is someone eligible if they have a high school diploma, but assess below a certain level?

A: For purposes of this RFA, participants with a secondary school diploma or GED are assumed to meet the necessary educational functioning levels and do not need to be tested for literacy/numeracy levels. Proper documentation of diploma attainment is required. Please note that participants with a secondary diploma or GED are not eligible to participate in the GED to College model.

Q: In defining youth eligibility (re: WIA funded services) would students who dropped out of a post-secondary institution qualify?

A: Yes, students who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements, have earned a secondary diploma or GED, and have dropped out of a post-secondary institution are eligible to be served under the Occupational Skills Training model. They would not be eligible to participate in the GED to College model because they had already earned a secondary credential.

Q: Page 25 states that youth may receive wages for work experiences in which they perform a job at a public or private workplace. Can work experience/wage payment occur at any point in the program year, or is it limited to "summer" months only?

A: Work experience may occur at any time during the program period, and is not limited to summer months.

Q: How many participants are allowed to work in the program? How many hours per weeks?

A: There are no limits on the number of participants who may participate in paid work activities as part of the program at any given time. There is no explicit limit on the number of hours of work experience per week under the RFA, but applicants should explain in the application how work experience will be effectively balanced with other program elements and other participant responsibilities such as child or dependent care.

Q: If a youth marginally succeeding in the program and the year is up but he/she don't pass any test, can the grantee re-enroll the participant w/out corrective measures?

A: This question is beyond the scope of the current RFA. Please note that all grants awarded under this RFA will be for one year, with three optional extension years available at the discretion of the WIC and DOES.

Past Performance

Q: If an organization does not have any past performance with DOES, can they use the past performance of partners in the past performance section?

A: Lead respondents should provide performance information relating to a grant or contract for the provision of services similar to those proposed under this RFA during at least one of the previous three years. Prior performance need not have been related to DOES grants or contracts.

Respondents may include past performance for partner organizations on the past performance form.

Q: Who fills out the past performance form and how do you include performance for current DOES funding if the year is not complete?

A: The respondent must complete the past performance form. Respondents should include performance data relating to similar services from at least one of the previous three years.

Service Delivery Area

Q: If you are located in Region 1, can you accept participants form Region 2 at your Region 1 program?

A: Yes. However, programs should specifically target outreach and recruitment efforts toward participants that reside in the region where services will be provided. The WIC and DOES will monitor program enrollment, and reserve the right to refer participants to programs located within their Region.

Example of other states that use this model

Q: Can you give us a list of States that have this model and they been very successful?
Q: Who are the other cities that have been successful administering these types of RFA?

A: The WIC and DOES developed the program design after extensive review of best practices in other jurisdictions, including program operated in Philadelphia, New York City, southwest Ohio, Baltimore, and Boston. These best practices were adapted based on consideration of the unique factors facing the out-of-school youth population in the District.

Partnerships

Q: If the partnering agency is a vendor of DOES would payment for training still come from the lead agency or DOES?

A: Payments for program services under this RFA will be made by DOES to the respondent. Respondents may propose to make subgrants or other payments to partners to cover costs for training or other services.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of times an organization can be a secondary partner? (…and not the primary applicants?)

A: There is no explicit limit on the number of applications for which an organization may be listed as a secondary partner under this RFA. However, respondents should include a clear description of the partnership as part of the application, including specific roles and responsibilities of the partner in implementing the program. Respondents will bear ultimate responsibility for performance outcomes under this RFA.

Q: On page 6 it states that respondent must demonstrate a partnership with a post-secondary Institution, but on page 22 it says a community college or other institute of higher education. Are these terms meant to refer to the same thing? Please define institute of higher education. If the entity is accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), which is listed as a nationally recognized accrediting agency by the United States Department of Education and is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, would this entity be considered an institute of higher education?

A: Any accredited community college or other post-secondary institution may serve as a post-secondary partner for purposes of the GED to College model.

Interim Measures

Q: Please provide an example of an interim credential. If youth earn an interim credential would this be counted as positive performance outcomes?

A: Interim credentials are certifications or recognition of an individual's attainment of specific skills or competencies that are integrally aligned with the academic or training requirements for a longer-term credential. They are intended to demonstrate a participant's progress toward a long-term outcome that may not be capable of completion within the one-year grant period – including an associate's or bachelor's degree, or journeyman certification - and may include (among other things) interim apprenticeship credentials, post-secondary certificates, or credentials awarded for the completion of a specific number of post-secondary credits within a course of study. They do not include general certifications, such as OSHA ten hour certifications, that are not specifically designed to meet the occupational or academic requirements of a longer-term credential.

Respondents who wish to utilize interim credentials as part of their program design and performance outcomes should clearly identify the type of interim credentials and how they align with the requirements for a longer-term credential. Respondents are not required to propose interim credentials as part of their overall program design.

Q: In the chart with Interim Program measures, grantees must report monthly the number of youth who graduate from the program. Can you please define "graduation"? Does this mean a youth who has completed one outcome, etc.?

A: For purposes of this RFA, graduation means program completion. Program completion must be defined by the respondent, based on the proposed program model.

Q: Work readiness measure indicates there will be a pre-and post-measurement tool provided by DOES. Is this tool going to be given to grantees to distribute to youth? If yes, when will grantees be provided with assessment?

A: Respondents who elect to measure work readiness through assessment may utilize the National Work Readiness Credential (which is available through UDC-CC and other locations throughout the city) or may utilize an assessment tool offered by DOES. If the respondent chooses to use the DOES assessment tool, the details for implementation will be determined as part of the final grant agreement.

Program Model

Q: If the youth is enrolled in the GED to College program, but midway through the program decides that she or he is better suited for working, would a grantee be able to transfer youth from "GED to College: to "Occupational Training" program? If so, how would such transfer affect outcome numbers?

A: If a participant chooses to discontinue enrollment in a program prior to program completion, that participant will be considered to have exited the program, and additional payments may not be made with respect to that participant. The participant will be counted against all applicable outcomes measures.

A participant who discontinues enrollment in one program would be eligible to enroll in another program in accordance with the enrollment and eligibility requirements of the new program.

Q: If a youth did not need a GED (had previously obtained a HSD), but needed assistance in enrolling in college, into which program model would this youth fall?

A: Based on the facts provided, this participant would not be a suitable candidate for either the GED to College or the Occupational Skills Training program model. The program may refer the participant to DOES for placement into alternative programming.

Documentation

Q: How does a youth provide documentation that they are not in a credential bearing institution?

A: Participants must self-attest to their status as part of the enrollment process with DOES. No specific documentation is required.

Posting the RFA questions:

Q: Why were questions due before the informational meeting, which is the common format for most RFP or RFA processes? The informational meeting helps to clarify questions that arise from our reading of the RFP and brings to light additional questions that need clarification. Is the informational meeting solely to answer the submitted questions? When will the answers be made available in writing? If there are additional questions based the answers given, how will they be addressed?

A: The WIC and DOES solicited questions in advance of the informational session in order to ensure that all relevant topics were covered as part of the opening presentation. All prospective applicants were afforded an opportunity to submit questions in advance of the informational session, and all participants in the informational session were invited to submit additional questions at the close of the session. All questions submitted by applicants during the informational session on August 3 are being addressed as part of this FAQ.

Application Template

Q: The application has several questions that do not have highlighted spaces to enter text. For example, we are asked to describe our program services on page 33 of the RFA. Where are we to input our answers to these questions? Should we attach a separate page or pages which contain our proposal or should we insert the answers below these questions in the text. Also, how will you differentiate between our proposal answers and your original text? What about our 40 page limitation, your questions take up space that would be used to delineate our answers. How do we account for space/pages taken up by your questions, rather than our answers? Also, how ill page numbering be affected?

A: Portions of the application are formatted as a Word template form. The following tips should assist you in completing those parts of the application:

- Before filling out the application, copy and paste the Grant Application portion of this document, Section X, into a new Word document.
- For text responses, please type information in the highlighted area.
- For check boxes, simply point and left click your mouse to add or delete X.
- To change an entry, use your mouse to navigate backwards and then click the left mouse button to select the appropriate field

The submitted grant application must address all questions and meet the following specifications:

- Must be formatted using a 1” margin and no smaller than a 12 point font
- Must include a table of contents
- Must be typed
- Cannot exceed 40 single spaced pages, with the exception of required attachments and budget information
- Pages should be numbered and include a header or footer identifying the respondent’s name, program model, and region

- Must identify each section and sub-section

As the above instructions indicate, not all of the application is in Word template form. In those cases, applicants should simply respond in essay form in the document. The application narrative itself cannot exceed 40 pages. Respondents may remove text explanations, but must leave the section and sub-section headers.