



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY  
Fiscal Year 2022**

**BRIDGES TO EMPLOYING YOUTH (BRIDGES)  
CONTINUATION**

**Announcement Date: November 22, 2021**

**Technical Assistance Workshop: December 6, 2021**

**Application Due Date: December 20, 2021**

**Robert Asaro-Angelo  
Commissioner**

**Bridges to Employing Youth  
Notice of Grant Opportunity – FY 2022**

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[Applicant Title Page](#)  
[Standard Assurances and Certifications and General Provisions](#)  
[Program Requirements](#)  
[Partnership Agreement Form](#)  
[Budget Detail Forms](#)

Take notice, in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4 et seq., the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (hereinafter “the NJDOL”) regularly publishes all notices of available funding for federal and state grants, awarded by the Department, on its website at <http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor>.

**A. NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM**

Bridges to Employing Youth (Bridges)

**B. PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE FUNDS WILL BE USED**

The NJDOL Office of Youth Programs recognizes that unique challenges and increased barriers experienced by certain special youth populations require proportionate responses of specialized services and supports to resolve. This Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) seeks to expand the capacity of NJDOL’s workforce system, through an influx of specialized providers, to adequately address the career development needs of the following special populations:

1. Youth with disabilities;
2. Justice-involved youth;
3. Youth who are or have aged out of Foster Care; and
4. Pregnant or parenting youth.

Youth who belong to each of these special populations experience higher rates of unemployment and poverty, lower educational opportunities and attainments, a deficit of work experience opportunities, and hardships of a unique nature and higher degree than the broader youth population.

The NJDOL Office of Youth Programs will administer the Bridges program continuation to provide specialized workforce development services to these populations in an effort to enhance the current practices and systems intended to serve their needs. NJDOL expects that this program will focus on partnerships and collaboration between state and local agencies and systems to create a coordinated process in ensuring the healthy career development of these populations.

Programs are required to serve one of the four targeted populations outlined above per application submission. An applicant who wants to serve multiple targeted populations must submit a separate application for each population.

**C. AVAILABLE FUNDING**

Bridges continuation funding will be made available through WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Set-Aside funds. The total amount of funding available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 (February 1, 2022 – January 31, 2023) is \$3,600,000.

Final awards are contingent upon State allocation of funds. The applicant’s budget must be well considered, necessary for the implementation of the program, and within the funding parameters. Final amounts will be determined at the time of pre-contract revisions. Ineligible, inappropriate or undocumented costs will be removed from the funding request.

## **D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

FY 2020 Bridges grantees are eligible to apply for this continuation grant.

All applications must establish a lead agency. The lead agency serves as the applicant agency of record, the legally recognized fiscal agent for the grant project, and the single point of contact for NJDOL. The lead agency will be expected to coordinate all aspects of the grant, i.e., outreach and recruitment; program services; project and spending plan; grant project monitoring and reporting; and fiscal management.

Applicants must demonstrate their experience serving the identified target population and their capacity to provide youth workforce development services, as outlined in section F and explained further in the FY22 Bridges Program Requirements attachment.

## **E. TARGETED POPULATIONS**

Applications must target eligible youth, defined as out-of-school\* youth (with or without a high school diploma), ages 16-24 in one of the following four targeted populations:

1. Youth with disabilities;
  - a. Defined as a youth who indicates that s/he has any "disability", as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. Justice-involved youth;
  - a. Defined as a youth who either (i) has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for committing a status offense or delinquent/criminal act, or (ii) requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction for committing delinquent acts, such as crimes against persons, crimes against property, status offenses, or other crimes.
3. Youth who are/have aged out of Foster Care; and
4. Pregnant or parenting youth.
  - a. Defined as youth who are expecting and/or parenting moms and dads.

\*For the purposes of this NGO, out-of-school youth is defined as any youth not attending nor committed to return to any school.

## **F. PROGRAM SERVICES**

Applicants must implement a comprehensive plan of activities, services, and strategies to address the needs of their targeted population, particularly as it relates to addressing the gaps in practices and systems identified in the applicant's statement of need.

The program services expected to be made available to participants in each targeted population are outlined on page four (4), and further clarified in the FY22 Bridges Program Requirements. Programs, where appropriate, must be designed to connect eligible youth with services according to their Individual Service Strategy (ISS), in order to support informed and individualized connections to education, training, WIOA programs, DVRS supported employment, military, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship, and unsubsidized employment.

NOTE: The services shaded below in blue are required to be provided to ALL participants.

<b>Program Services</b>	<b>Youth with Disabilities</b>	<b>Justice-Involved Youth</b>	<b>Youth Aging Out of Foster Care</b>	<b>Pregnant or Parenting Youth</b>
Individual Service Strategy (ISS)	X	X	X	X
Risk and Needs Assessment		X		
Intake / Registration with local county One-Stop Career Center's AOSOS System	X	X	X	X
WIOA Youth Eligibility Determination with One-Stop Career Center	X	X	X	X
Registration with local county Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	X			
Case management	X	X	X	X
Supportive services	X	X	X	X
Benefits counseling	X	X	X	X
Legal services		X	X	X
Basic skills academic instruction and/or high school equivalency completion supports	X	X	X	X
Standardized Academic Pre-test & Post-test (CASAS GOALS)	X	X	X	X
Career guidance, planning, and counseling	X	X	X	X
Employability & workplace readiness training	X	X	X	X
Financial literacy education	X	X	X	X
Mentoring	X	X	X	X
Work experience Opportunities (Paid or Unpaid)	X	X	X	X
Placement support	X	X	X	X
Follow-up/ retention support (90-day period)	X	X	X	X

## **Recommended Partnerships per Population:**

### *Youth with Disabilities*

Successful proposals should partner with their local School District(s) in order to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth, and with their local county Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) in order to make appropriate referrals for DVRS services as needed.

### *Justice-Involved Youth*

Successful proposals should partner with legal services organizations and the Juvenile Justice Commission to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth. Proposals should also demonstrate a partnership with legal services organizations to connect this target population with legal services and other program elements utilized to eliminate structural barriers to employment (including, but not limited to, access to and understanding their record, assistance with sealing or expunging their record, accessing Federal Bonding, and supporting youth and employer education about state background terminology as well as employment laws).

### *Youth who are Aging or have Aged Out of Foster Care*

Successful proposals should partner with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and/or DHS-funded programs to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible youth.

### *Youth who are Pregnant and/or Parenting*

Successful proposals should partner with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children and Families to aid in identifying and recruiting eligible both male and female youth.

## **G. PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND REPORTING**

Successful providers must be prepared to have systems in place to track, document and report all outcomes. Performance measures for successful providers will include:

- Enroll the contracted number of participants to serve;
- For participants without a high school diploma\* at time of enrollment:
  - 70 percent must obtain a measurable skill gain if their grade level equivalent (according to CASAS GOALS) is below 9<sup>th</sup> grade level in both Math and Reading.
    - A measurable skill gain is defined as a.) Growth of one grade level in either subject of reading or math, based on CASAS GOALS post-test; or b.) Successful passing of a high school equivalency exam, resulting in a high school diploma
  - 70 percent must obtain a high school diploma if their grade level equivalent is at or above 9<sup>th</sup> grade level in both Math and Reading.

\*In the case of Youth with Disabilities, if a High School diploma is deemed unattainable by way of standardized academic testing, that youth is not expected to receive pre- and post-testing nor be expected to attain a High School diploma.

- At least 70 percent of ALL participants will achieve a placement into one or more of the following:
  - Full-Time Education Program;
  - Occupational Training Program;
  - WIOA (Youth or Adult) Program;
  - Military;
  - Pre-Apprenticeship or Apprenticeship Program;
  - DVRS Supported Employment (only for youth with disabilities);
  - Meaningful Unsubsidized Employment, defined as:
    - Full-time; and
    - Earning at least minimum wage.

Grantees will be required to collect and report specific data regarding demographics and services provided to each participant. The process for reporting the completed data will be provided to the grantee upon awarding of funds.

Grantees must submit a monthly fiscal report to [YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov](mailto:YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Grantees will be paid on a monthly reimbursement method, after the financial report has been submitted to and approved by NJDOL.

## **H. PROCEDURES FOR ELIGIBLE ENTITIES TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDS**

Applications must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability and plan to provide the requested services. All attachments mentioned within this document are provided as live links on page one (1). Each applicant must submit an application packet which must be organized as follows:

### **1. Applicant Title Page**

Complete all summary information. The Chief Executive Officer or authorized signatory must sign and date the title page.

### **2. Standard Assurances and Certifications and General Provisions**

NJDOL's linked Standard Assurances and Certifications and General Provisions must be signed and submitted as part of the application packet.

### **3. Statement of Need**

Applicants must identify gaps in the current practices and systems serving the targeted population to be served by their program. Demonstrate the need for the program, in relation to the NGO, and provide documentation and data that substantiates the identified gaps and needs.

### **4. Organizational Commitment and Capacity**

Applicants should describe the extent of their organizational commitment to the program. The applicant should include their experience(s) working with the targeted population chosen to be served and implementing services similar to the program services described within this NGO.

**5. Program Narrative**

Applicants must outline a comprehensive plan of recruitment, activities, services, and strategies to implement each component of the Program Services listed in section F and to successfully meet or exceed the performance measures listed in section G. Successful applications will clearly address each service component in separate sections.

Applicants should additionally address the following questions when crafting their program narrative:

- a. Include a list of recruitment sources/partners to ensure diverse entry points to the program.
- b. What is the timeline of your plan from recruitment through placement?

**6. Planned Partnerships**

Applicants who plan to partner with other entities to provide any of the services listed in section F must submit partnership agreements as part of their application. The roles of each partnership must also be addressed in the program narrative.

**7. Budget Details and Narrative**

Applicants must submit the linked budget detail forms and a budget narrative reflecting how program funds will be expended. All amounts reported on the budget detail must be fully supported by information provided in the budget narrative. Applicants must provide a demonstrated costs basis and provide justification for all aspects of the budget.

**Note:** Only 10% of grant funds may be used for administrative/indirect service purposes. Administrative personnel are staff not directly working with participants. Non-personnel administrative costs are expenses that do not directly benefit participants. (i.e. copy machines, payroll services, etc.)

**Evaluation Criteria:** All applications will be evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to the NGO, and will use the standard evaluation criteria listed below:

Criteria	Total Points (100)
Statement of Need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps in the current practices and systems serving the targeted population to be served are clearly identified.</li> <li>• Documentation and data substantiates the identified gaps.</li> </ul>	10
Organizational Commitment and Capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The applicant’s commitment to the project is well-documented and possesses the organizational capacity, including necessary resources and relevant experiences working with their selected target population, to support successful implementation of this program.</li> </ul>	10



<p>Program Narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program narrative is comprehensive and reasonable, addresses the identified needs and will contribute to the achievement of the intended benefits of the grant program.</li> <li>• The processes for recruitment, intake, and eligibility determination are clear and well planned.</li> <li>• Recruitment plan includes various referral sources/entry points into the program.</li> <li>• The program services are clearly addressed in separate sections and are in accordance with section F of this NGO.</li> <li>• The timeline for program implementation is clearly laid out and the sequencing is easy to follow.</li> </ul>	60
<p>Planned Partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes agreements with partners relevant to program implementation.</li> <li>• Partnerships have clearly defined roles.</li> </ul>	10
<p>Budget Details and Budget Narrative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project budget adheres to the described program services and the proposed expenditures are reasonably necessary for their effective implementation.</li> </ul>	10

*\*If any of the required documents are not submitted, signed and dated, your application will be considered incomplete and, therefore, may not be reviewed by the selection committee.*

## **I. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

NJDOL will provide a remote technical assistance workshop. Attendance is mandatory for applicants to be considered eligible to apply. The workshop will be held on December 6, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. via GoToMeeting.

Applicants planning to attend the workshop must RSVP via email to [YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov](mailto:YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov) and include name of organization, names of attendees, and email address for each attendee. The deadline to RSVP for the workshop is by 4:00pm on December 2, 2021.

Only those who have properly submitted an RSVP will receive an email confirmation and GoToMeeting link to attend.

The completed, signed application must be submitted electronically no later than 12:00 P.M. on December 20, 2021. Please submit the application via email with the subject line marked “(Name of Organization) – Application for FY22 Bridges to Employing Youth” to [YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov](mailto:YouthPrograms@dol.nj.gov). Application documents can be submitted as Word or PDF files, but all budget information must be submitted as Excel files.

## **J. AWARD PROCESS**

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must have satisfactorily completed the required elements of this NGO. All applications are subject to review, pre-contract revisions, and

approval by the NJDOL Commissioner. Final amounts will be determined at the time of pre-contract revisions and are subject to the availability of funds.

NJDOL reserves the right to reject any and all applications when circumstances indicate that it is in its best interest to do so. NJDOL's best interests in this context include, but are not limited to, loss of funding; inability of the applicant to provide adequate services and indication of misrepresentation of information.