Helping Justice-Involved Reenter Employment

Evaluation Request for Applications

Weekly Q&A as of September 13, 2023

Q1: Can we get a draft copy of the agreement with the state that will be used upon award? Can we use our federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) instead of the 10% admin and indirect rate shown in the Application Attachments? Are there any restrictions on the use of funds such as for a fee or profit?

A1: Because a specific service is being provided to CWDB by evaluation contracts, they are subject to state contracting rules as outlined in the State Contracting Manual. There is no difference for a for-profit entity, as long as they abide by state contracting rules and deliver the services they say they will. There isn't a draft to share until we develop the scope of work based on what the contractor submits. The contract is built around the scope of work, which is shared with the contractor for feedback before execution. This happens *after* we have awarded the contracts. Contract execution can take up to 5 months, and only then can work begin when the contract is fully executed. If you have a federally approved NICRA, you need to provide CWDB with a copy, and it will be honored in lieu of the 10%. All funds must be used for activities related to evaluation of the HIRE grant program as outlined in the contract.

Below is more helpful information on state contracting rules. Note that this information supersedes and corrects information on the HIRE Evaluation Application Attachments.

Direct, Indirect, and Administrative Costs
Definitions and guidance related to Direct, Administrative, and Indirect costs are provided below:

Direct (Program) Costs
Expenses directly related to implementing the proposed grant activities.

Administrative Costs
Expenses directly associated with grant implementation, management, and reporting. Indirect Costs Expenses associated with the costs of doing business that are not readily identified within a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs. Indirect costs are frequently referred to as overhead expenses. Generally, direct administration costs differ from

indirect costs in that the latter are considered organization-wide costs that are required to run operations but do not have a direct role in grant implementation.

Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)
Indirect cost rate established with the Federal Government. Each agreement will include:

- The approved rate(s) and information directly related to the use of the rates, e.g., type of rate, effective period, and distribution base;
- The treatment of fringe benefits as either direct and/or indirect costs;
- General terms and conditions; and
- Special remarks, e.g., composition of the indirect cost pool.

If claiming an indirect cost rate above 20%, the applicant is required to submit a NICRA from a cognizant agency outlining all the information above to the CWDB for review and approval.

NICRAs with redacted information will not be accepted. Organizations with a NICRA accepted by CWDB will have direct administrative costs capped at 10% of the grant award.

De Minimis Rate
A de minimis indirect cost rate of 20% of the grant award can be used by organizations who do not have a NICRA or who cannot provide one.

Administrative Cost Cap
If using the De Minimis rate, direct administrative costs are capped at 10% and combined direct and indirect cannot exceed 20% of the grant award amount.

When Should Costs that are Normally Indirect Be Counted as Direct Costs?
Costs for program implementation are direct costs, however, direct costs should include costs normally classified as indirect when they are directly allocated to the project, such as when:

- Overall program management, program coordination, project director, and project evaluator.
- Preparing program plans, budgets schedules, and related amendments.
- Monitoring of programs, projects, sub-recipients and related systems and processes.
- Developing systems and procedures, including management information systems, for assuring compliance with program requirements.
- Preparing reports and other documents related to the program requirements.
- Evaluating program results against stated objectives.
- Performing administration services such as program specific payroll, accounting, auditing or legal activities. Examples of non-labor costs include:
  - Costs for goods and services required for administration of the program, including such goods and services as the rental or purchase of equipment, utilities, office supplies, postage, and rental and maintenance of office space.
  - Travel costs incurred for official business in carrying out program management and administrative activities.

Q2: Does the CWDB allow the same entity to evaluate more than one of its programs?

A2: Yes, there is no prohibition on the same entity evaluating more than one CWDB program at a time.

Q3: Could you share with us the number of HIRE grantees and the period of performance for their work? Would it be feasible for our team to propose an evaluation with a longer timeframe than the one laid out in the RFA document? This would allow us to have more follow-up time to the intervention and thus better document outcomes (such as recidivism and employment). Is there more information available on CWDB's expectations from HIRE grantees?

A3: The CWDB is still reviewing applications from potential HIRE grantees. The number of HIRE grantees will be announced shortly. The grantees' period of performance will be approximately one year, but some extensions may be granted. It is feasible to propose an evaluation with a longer timeframe. The CWDB has requested to extend the evaluation timeline and expects that the request will be granted. However, since the request has not yet been granted, the current timeline is 1.5 years. The CWDB expects that the Evaluator will be able to analyze one-year recidivism rates and wages 2 quarters after exit for all HIRE participants. More information is available on expectations for HIRE grantees in the [HIRE Request for Applications](#).

Q4: Could you provide more information on what kind of performance monitoring data is collected by the CWDB and/or the HIRE grantees?

A4: The CWDB will require HIRE grantees to collect performance monitoring data using its forthcoming cloud-based participant data reporting module on Cal E-Grants. The list of metrics will be similar to those found in the [State Grant Data Solution spreadsheet](#), and include participant demographics and characteristics, workforce services provided, milestones achieved, credentials earned, and employment outcomes, including data from the California Unemployment Insurance base wage file.

Q5: The CWDB website broadly describes "employment services" offered through the HIRE initiative as training, reskilling and upskilling, and supportive services. Can you please provide more details on the types of employment services that will be provided, as well as the eligibility criteria, if any, that will be applied to these services?

A5: HIRE Grantees will have the ability to provide career services (e.g. job search assistance, mock interviews), training services (e.g. Multi-Craft Core Curriculum construction training, computer coding, health counselor training), and supportive services (e.g. transportation, stipends) to their HIRE participants at their discretion. Participant eligibility requirements are set forth in the [HIRE Request for Applications](#).

Q6: Will the CWDB publicly share responses to questions that other potential applicants for this evaluation RFA have asked?

A6: Yes, we will post answers to questions that come to ResearchUnit@cwdb.ca.gov about the HIRE evaluation on our website.

Q7: What are the funding sources for the HIRE evaluation? Is WIOA discretionary funding being used?

A7: The HIRE evaluation is funded exclusively with California state general funds. No WIOA funding will be used for the HIRE evaluation.