



**COMMONWEALTH**  
 **CORPORATION**

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**2024**

RELEASED SEPTEMBER

**Workforce  
Competitiveness  
Trust Fund**

ESOL FOR EMPLOYMENT | FOCUS ON EMERGENCY  
ASSISTANCE: SHELTER-BASED POPULATIONS

Funding is provided by EOLWD (Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development) through the EA Supplemental Budget to support Emergency Assistance (EA): Shelter Based Populations. Opportunities for funding over this limit dependent on funding availability.



# Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund

ESOL FOR EMPLOYMENT | FOCUS ON EMERGENCY  
ASSISTANCE: SHELTER-BASED POPULATIONS



## APPLICATION

Click here to begin your application and submit your proposal.



## PRIMARY CONTACT

Adam Cutler, Director  
Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund  
Commonwealth Corporation  
33 Harrison Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
Acutler@commcorp.org  
(617) 717-6950



## QUESTIONS

Bidders can submit questions and sign up for notifications. Click here to learn more.



## WEBSITE

[www.commcorp.org](http://www.commcorp.org)

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## APPLICATION MATERIALS:

Part 1	<a href="#">WCTF FY25 ESOL for Employment Application Summary.docx</a>
Part 2	<a href="#">WCTF FY25 ESOL for Employment Program Narrative.docx</a>
Part 3	<a href="#">WCTF ESOL for Employment FY25 Budget Form.xlsx</a>
Part 4	Letters of Commitment from Employer Partners (3 to 5 required)
Part 5	<a href="#">COGS.docx</a>
Part 6	<a href="#">W-9</a>
Part 7	DUA screening

**ESOL for Employment**  
**Focus on Emergency Assistance: Shelter Based Populations**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**SECTION ONE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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<i>Executive Summary</i>	
<b><i>Grant Objectives</i></b>	<p>English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services designed to serve individuals currently residing in Emergency Assistance shelters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.</p> <p>Provide career readiness wrap around supports with the primary objective of obtaining unsubsidized employment into any occupation or sector within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Job Coaches should continue to work with participants for at least 6 months after exit from the training program.</p> <p>Support ongoing learning and development of effective ESOL training and job placement programs.</p> <p>Programs should focus on practical English proficiency, workplace communication and cultural understanding to ensure participants can effectively perform job responsibilities.</p> <p>Support participants in securing entry-level employment and achieving at least 30 days of job retention, fostering economic stability and integration into the community. Jobs must be categorized as unsubsidized employment with benefits.</p>
<b><i>Eligible Applicants</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Based Organizations</li> <li>• Non-Profit and For-Profit Training Providers</li> <li>• MassHire Workforce Development Boards and MassHire Career Centers</li> <li>• Employers partnering with established ESOL and Career Readiness training providers</li> <li>• Community Colleges located in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts</li> <li>• Industry Associations</li> <li>• Collective Bargaining Associations</li> </ul>

<b><i>Funding Source and Funding Availability</i></b>	\$2,000,000 with a maximum grant of \$400,000. Opportunities for funding over this limit dependent on funding availability. Funding is provided by EOLWD (Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development) EA Supplemental Budget allocation to support Emergency Assistance (EA): Shelter Based Populations.
<b><i>MassHire Career Center Partnership</i></b>	Grantees are required to partner with their local MassHire Career Center to assist with recruitment and potential transfers of residence from one region to another and continued support to other regions of the state. The exception to this requirement is if the lead applicant is a MassHire Career Center.
<b><i>Duration of Contracts</i></b>	Contracts will be issued for up to two years.
<b><i>Payments</i></b>	Funds will be disbursed on a cost-reimbursement basis. Lead applicants are expected to submit one invoice each month using the required invoice template provided by the Commonwealth Corporation. Grantees will only be reimbursed for expenses incurred during the contract period. Lead applicants for each partnership will be required to maintain and submit, upon request, back-up documentation for expenses and match contributions.
<b><i>Target Populations</i></b>	<p><b>For purposes of this bid solicitation, the eligible population includes individuals who are eligible for the emergency housing assistance program on or after April 30, 2024.</b></p> <p>An <b>unemployed</b> individual is defined as an individual who is not employed at the time of enrollment in the program.</p>
<b><i>Outcome Expectations</i></b>	<p>A strong proposal will have the components required to achieve the following rates for completion and job placement (measured at 30 days retention.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 65% of enrolled underemployed/unemployed participants will complete training.</li> <li>• At least 50% of underemployed/unemployed participants who enroll will be placed into an unsubsidized job measured at 30 days retention. Unsubsidized employment can include any job or position in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.</li> <li>• A completed resume for each participant of the training. The resumes will be tracked and stored by a system identified by the grantee.</li> <li>• A completion certificate from the training program. The completion certificate can be created in house by the organization</li> </ul>

	<p>and does not necessarily need to be an industry recognized credential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed plan and expectations for participant entailing next steps in ESOL and/or job training.</li> <li>• Additional (preferred but not required) assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Burlington English</li> <li>○ ACT WorkKeys</li> <li>○ Engen</li> <li>○ BEST Plus</li> <li>○ MAPT</li> <li>○ TABE</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Applicants may propose performance rates that are higher or lower than those detailed. Any applicant that proposes a lower set of performance rates must provide a detailed rationale.</p>
<p><b><i>Allowable Costs</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training delivery including classroom and online activities that specifically support ESOL and other related areas</li> <li>• Career Readiness instruction and support</li> <li>• Planning period and associated costs. The planning period shall not exceed 90 days</li> <li>• Marketing, Outreach, Recruitment, Assessment, and Selection</li> <li>• Support services required to ensure participants’ success, such as transportation, childcare, uniforms, tools, and equipment</li> <li>• Stipends and incentives</li> <li>• Project Manager and related staff salaries and time dedicated to the project</li> <li>• Costs associated with licensing of digitally enabled training</li> <li>• Technology costs such as Laptops and WIFI stations</li> <li>• Textbooks related to the training</li> </ul> <p>Additional funds may be allocated for individuals' slots for participants who would like to participate in short-term training programs such as C.N.A. and OSHA or Driver’s Education training programs. These additional funds could cover all aspects of the training in question from tuition to exam fees to uniforms.</p>
<p><b><i>Required Activities</i></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate in a Community of Practice. Community of Practices are convenings that act as a powerful tool to bring together grantee partners and exchange best practices and challenges. This guides their learning and gives meaning to their actions. Partnerships are built through a shared space, discussion, activities, and learning. Methods and tools will be shared and developed. This is an integral part of this grant that requires participation from all grantee partners.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Submit quarterly and final narrative reports based upon performance, successes, and challenges.</li> <li>3. Collect and submit Training and Placement Program participant-level enrollment and outcome data to Commonwealth Corporation utilizing Apricot.</li> <li>4. Requirement to partner with a MassHire Career or Workforce Board.</li> </ol>
<p><b><i>Program Design</i></b></p>	<p>Career Coaching model must be included in all proposals.</p> <p>Program exit: When employment with a minimum of 30-days retention is obtained.</p> <p>Programs with a cohort-based model should have time entries.</p> <p>Programs must be in person or hybrid models.</p> <p>Career Readiness topic examples to be incorporated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview skills</li> <li>• Job search skills</li> <li>• Resume development</li> <li>• Application skills</li> <li>• Workplace expectations</li> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Safety/Care</li> <li>• Health/Hygiene</li> <li>• Career exploration</li> <li>• Soft skills</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Participant Eligibility</i></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participant must have the desire and goal to get a new job.</li> <li>2. Individuals on the pathway to federal work authorization who are expected to obtain their Employment Authorization Document (EAD) before the completion of their training term are eligible to participate.</li> </ol>

## SECTION TWO: ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

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<i>Administrative Requirements</i>	
<i>Participant Level Data Reporting Requirements</i>	<p>Grantees will be required to collect and provide the following types of data:</p> <p>Before enrollment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Commonwealth Corporation will work with grantees to design a strategy to collect these data as applicable. Data may include, in aggregate, applicant basic demographic information, results of applicant screening process, and for non-enrollees, the reason(s) they were not enrolled in the program.</li></ul> <p>Upon enrollment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participant demographics, participant Social Security numbers and participant employment status.</li></ul> <p>Throughout the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Services provided and participant progression through the program, including participant attendance, participation levels, and credentials attained.</li></ul> <p>Upon completion of the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New position/employment or wage advancement information and retention information.</li></ul> <p><i>Grantees will be required to collect enrollment data using a participant registration form provided by Commonwealth Corporation and enter data on participants and training services in a participant-level database to be provided by Commonwealth Corporation such as <b>Apricot by Social Solutions</b>.</i></p> <p><i>Commonwealth Corporation will not provide any party with the names of any participants or any other information that may be used to identify a participant unless the participant has provided prior permission.</i></p>

<p><b><i>Program Progress Reporting Requirements</i></b></p>	<p>Grantees will be required to submit the following narrative reports using templates supplied by Commonwealth Corporation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Quarterly Reports:</u> These reports will be due quarterly and will include updates on the training timeline, an update and reflection on progress in meeting performance measures, and reports on the project’s successes and challenges. The format for this report will be provided to grantees after a contract is awarded.</li> <li>2. <u>Final Report:</u> This report will be submitted at the end of the contract period and will document what was achieved through the investment of these funds, inform future funding practices, and provide information that could be used more generally among organizations doing similar work. The format for this report will be provided to grantees after a contract is awarded.</li> </ol> <p>Commonwealth Corporation must submit an annual report to the legislature providing results of the grants made through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. Commonwealth Corporation will provide the legislature with grantee specific information and will use data from the database and information from the narrative reports as a primary source.</p>
<p><b><i>Participant Eligibility &amp; Documentation</i></b></p>	<p>Grantees must establish a selection and eligibility process to identify individuals who meet the target population definitions for this RFP (Request for Proposals) and are appropriate to participate in training.</p> <p>The lead applicant and its employer partners will be required to collect and maintain the following documentation for each participant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Documentation of the participant’s employment status at the time of enrollment</li> <li>2. Participant Registration Form, using a required form provided by Commonwealth Corporation</li> <li>3. Documentation of training services received</li> <li>4. Case management/coaching notes</li> <li>5. Documentation of new employment and retention</li> <li>6. Participants must be 16 years of age or over</li> <li>7. If under 18 years of age, you must be outside of the traditional public-school setting</li> </ol>
<p><b><i>Program &amp; Fiscal Monitoring</i></b></p>	<p>Commonwealth Corporation is responsible for ensuring that organizations receiving grant funds:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have the fiscal and program systems needed to meet all relevant federal and state requirements</li> <li>2. Meet the terms of the grant award outlined in the contract with Commonwealth Corporation</li> <li>3. Provide quality services to program participants; and</li> <li>4. Expend grant funds only for allowable activities</li> </ol> <p>To fulfill this responsibility, the Commonwealth Corporation will periodically request, and review documentation related to the grantee organization and grant expenses and activities. We may conduct at least one in-person fiscal review over the grant period. Additional information will be provided after a contract is awarded.</p>
<b><i>Technical Assistance</i></b>	<p>Each grantee will be assigned a Commonwealth Corporation Program Manager and must assign a main contact at their organization accountable for the grant. The Commonwealth Corporation Program Manager will be available to support grantees through the grant's duration, answering questions about operational issues and providing technical assistance to ensure grantees meet their performance outcomes.</p>
<b><i>Payment</i></b>	<p>Funds will be disbursed on a cost reimbursement basis. Grantees will be required to submit invoices monthly using a Fiscal Status Report (FSR) or another similar tool supplied by the Commonwealth Corporation. Grantees will only be reimbursed for expenses incurred during the contract period. The fiscal reimbursement process is subject to change in 2024 as new software programs and schedules are to be incorporated into regular operation. Grantees are required to maintain and submit, upon request, back-up documentation for expenses.</p>
<b><i>Project Terms and Conditions</i></b>	<p>Grantees will be required to abide by the Commonwealth Corporation's Standard Contract Terms and Conditions, which will be provided during contract negotiation. In addition, all final contracts are subject to negotiation of a final statement of work.</p>
<b><i>Deliverables and Ownership</i></b>	<p>Grantees agree to license or otherwise make available to Commonwealth Corporation in perpetuity, without charge, all materials prepared and/or produced in whole or in part with these funds, for Commonwealth Corporation's use and dissemination.</p>

***Equipment***

It is anticipated that partnerships will utilize existing capacity to deliver training programs, including existing equipment that can be used to provide hands-on training to participants. If equipment required to continue or increase seat capacity is not available in a region, applicants may make a case to use grant funds for this purpose. A good case would include a summary of an inventory of current capacity and an analysis of the gap between current capacity and the capacity needed to meet projected enrollments.

## SECTION THREE: SUBMISSION SCHEDULE AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION

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<i>Submission Schedule</i>	
Activity	Date
Request for Proposals Released	September 2024
Initial Webinar: Pre-Application Technical Assistance	October 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
Question and Answer Sessions	By request to the Director of WCTF
Initial Responses Due	November 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2024
Applicants Notified of Status	Varies by award
Earliest Anticipated Contract Start Date	Varies by award-average of 4 to 6 months from application due date.
Anticipated Contract End Date	Up to 2 years after contract start date

<i>Instructions for Submission</i>	
<b><i>Clarification Period</i></b>	<p>Questions about this grant program will be accepted in writing. Please submit questions via the following link: <a href="https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/329114">https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/329114</a>.</p> <p>Potential applicants can sign up at the same link to receive email notifications when new responses are posted. However, all potential applicants are advised to check the Commonwealth Corporation’s website periodically for additional information and updates.</p>
<b><i>Application Submission Instructions</i></b>	<p>Applications may be submitted while the RFP is posted. Applications received by November 8th, 2024, at 5:00 PM will be reviewed in our initial funding cycle. Please upload your submission electronically to the following link: <a href="https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/329117">https://commcorp.tfaforms.net/329117</a></p> <p>(1) <b>Name</b> of the lead applicant organization, (2) the lead applicant organization’s <b>Federal Employer ID Number</b>, (3) the lead applicant organization’s <b>Department of Unemployment Assistance ID Number</b>, (4) the <b>Total Program Design Funds</b></p>

**Requested**, and (5) the lead applicant organization’s **Primary Contact Information** (to be notified upon decision of grant award).

Applicants should review all components before uploading to ensure they have completed all the required information.

- Application Summary forms must be submitted in the provided MS Word file format.
- Program Narrative forms must be submitted in the provided MS Word file format.
- Budget forms must be submitted in the MS Excel file format provided.
- Signed MOAs (Memorandum of Agreement) or letters of commitment must be scanned and submitted as a single PDF file.
- COGS must be submitted in the form of a single PDF file.
- W-9 must be submitted in the form of a single PDF file.

***Training Program Grant Application Package***

The following parts make up the required components of the Grant Application Package. Failure to provide any of the documents or materials listed below may result in the application's disqualification.

Please do not change the order of the questions/sections. You may adjust the spacing in each section to accommodate your answers.

Part 1	<a href="#">WCTF FY25 ESOL for Employment Application Summary.docx</a>
Part 2	<a href="#">WCTF FY25 ESOL for Employment Program Narrative.docx</a>
Part 3	<a href="#">WCTF ESOL for Employment FY25 Budget Form.xlsx</a>
Part 4	Letters of Commitment from Employer Partners (3 to 5 required)
Part 5	<a href="#">COGS.docx</a>
Part 6	<a href="#">W-9</a>
Part 7	DUA Screening

## SECTION FOUR: PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

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### *Proposal Evaluation Process*

Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation will be reviewed by the Commonwealth Corporation. Representatives of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and other state agency partners may participate in this process.

The review process will consist of the following steps:

**Step 1:  
Threshold  
Criteria  
Screening**

Submissions will be screened for completeness, conformity to the program requirements and timeliness of response. Submissions that are incomplete, non-conforming, or late may not be considered.

**Step 2:  
Compliance  
Screening**

Commonwealth Corporation will analyze all lead applicants to comply with state and federal law. Lead applicants are encouraged to review these criteria and ensure they are complying prior to applying. Commonwealth Corporation will conduct the following reviews to ensure compliance:

1. Ensure applicants are in good standing with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. The Commonwealth Corporation will conduct this screening by reviewing the Certificate of Good Standing (C.O.G.S.) submitted in the Qualifications Submission Package. **Please note that community colleges, public vocational technical high schools and public state universities serving as the lead applicant do not need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing.**
2. Please follow this guidance when requesting and submitting a Certificate of Good Standing from the Department of Revenue:
  - a. The **Certificate of Good Standing from the Department of Revenue** is different from and should not be confused with a **Certificate of Incorporation from the Secretary of State**
  - b. C.O.G.S. must be less than six months old
  - c. Please visit the Department of Revenue’s website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/certificate-of-good-standing-from-department-of-revenue-dor> for more information about the C.O.G.S. and to complete an online application to obtain a Certificate
  - d. Applications for a C.O.G.S. can take 4-6 weeks to be processed.
3. Ensure applicant is in full compliance with all obligations to the Department of Unemployment Assistance, Department of Industrial Accidents, and any other obligations to the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts. The Commonwealth Corporation will work with the Department of Unemployment Assistance to conduct this review.

**Step 3: Review Committee**

A review committee will review and score all eligible submissions. Review results will be documented. The Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to request more information from any applicant to ensure that the review committee fully understands the proposed program and applicant qualifications. Some proposals may be sent to a WCTF staff member who will provide Technical Assistance to meet the minimum standards for a successful, potential award.

Submitted proposals will be reviewed and scored based on the following criteria:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Point Value</b>
A. Track record of success and qualifications/capacity of lead applicant and partner organizations with grant management, fiscal coordination, and implementation of proposed program design	20
B. Compelling evidence of partner engagement in partnership and program design, including job placement strategy that is likely to result in placement for a majority of program completers	20
C. Clear program design that addresses the required program design elements and services, including relevance to proposed target population and occupations targeted for job placement	30
D. Strong MOAs/letters of support that include an articulation of shared goals and roles, responsibilities, and commitments of each partner, including strong commitments from employers that indicate a strong likelihood that employers will hire program completers	10
E. Budget accuracy and reasonableness	20

	<p><i>Please note:</i> Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to consider the applicant's past performance in operating grants administered by Commonwealth Corporation and factor this performance into funding decisions.</p>
<p><b>Step 4: Notification of Grant Award Status</b></p>	<p>All applicants will be notified of their award status by email.</p>

### *Additional Evaluation Notes*

In addition to the scoring system outlined, Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to only consider submissions that, in our sole judgment, are complete and responsive to the solicitation's requirements and include all required application components. Additionally, Commonwealth Corporation and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development reserve the right to consider other criteria in making competitive awards among comparably qualified applicants. Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to reject all applications or accept all applications, in whole or in part, if deemed in the interest of Commonwealth Corporation or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to do so.

Furthermore, Commonwealth Corporation, reserves the right, if a proposal is awarded, to increase the amount and duration of the grant award pending formal submission of a modification request demonstrating unmet demand and satisfactory performance of previous spending.

This RFP does not commit Commonwealth Corporation to award any contracts. Upon submission, all applications become the property of Commonwealth Corporation. Commonwealth Corporation is not responsible for electronic submissions that are not received by Commonwealth Corporation. If applicants propose to use other funding sources to support the implementation of the proposed program, Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to consult with the other funders to ensure appropriate alignment of resources. The Commonwealth Corporation reserves the right to extend grant award amounts and periods of performance in accordance with funding source allowances and renew funding for subsequent grants.

## *Appeals*

Appeals of the funding decision may be filed with President/CEO of CommCorp, Commonwealth Corporation, 33 Harrison Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02111. Appeals must be filed within fifteen (15) days of the date of Commonwealth Corporation's notice to unsuccessful bidders. The President may decide to hold an informal review of the decision, and may decide to grant an appeal, deny an appeal, or modify an award based on information provided during the informal review.



# Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund

ESOL FOR EMPLOYMENT | FOCUS ON EMERGENCY  
ASSISTANCE: SHELTER-BASED POPULATIONS

-  **Develop & Implement**  
employer and worker responsive programs
-  **Enhance**  
worker skills, incomes, productivity, and retention
-  **Empower**  
Massachusetts firms to increase quality and  
competitiveness