

SACRAMENTO EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AGENCY
BREAKING BARRIERS IN EMPLOYMENT FOR ADULTS WITH
AUTISM PILOT PROGRAM

EVALUATOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

January 10, 2020

- 1) What are the formatting requirements for the proposal, if any (e.g., page limits, font, font size, line spacing, etc.)?

Answer: Line spacing, font and font size were not specified, however, the required, fill-in enabled application form has been preset to single line spacing and Calibri, 12 point font. Additionally, margins have been preset. Also, no page limits were set for any of the sections.

- 2) Can proposers attach additional documents to the proposal (e.g., resumes, tables, etc.)?

Answer: Other than the required certifications and disclosures, and the resolution indicating proposal signing and submission authority, no other documents should be attached. If additional documents are attached to a proposal, they will not be considered in the evaluation.

- 3) The RFP notes that Meristem's contract began on December 3, 2018 and will end on March 31, 2021. Can you provide any further details on the timeline of Meristem's work? When it is planning to complete each phase of the project, and what has it accomplished so far?

Answer: Breaking Barriers Implementation Plan –

Step I: Training young adults with Autism in leadership and self-advocacy (completed, but ongoing learning continues)

- Recruit young adults with Autism for leadership training so that they can participate in employer/stakeholder working groups and assist with the development of an employer training manual.
- Combine leadership training with self and legislative advocacy skill development that will include understanding employment rights and responsibilities, facilitation techniques, job coaching and mentoring, mediation techniques and self-leadership.

Step II: Assessment of the impediments to hiring, training, and retaining employees with Autism (first two bullets completed)

- Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews of parents, caregivers, educators, and policymakers, and employers, to gain insights into the perceived employment challenges facing people with Autism.
- Gain first hand employment insight through interviews with young adults with Autism to determine real barriers that they have experienced in obtaining, sustaining, and thriving in employment.

- Target partner employers in various workforce sectors that align with skill sets of the Autism population, including office/administrative support services, retail and hospitality, manufacturing, and information technology.

Step III: Development of Employer Manual and Training Program (almost completed)

- Research existing training programs and promising workplace integration strategies for individuals with Autism and other disabilities.
- Develop a training manual and program that will help employers successfully recruit and support individuals with Autism into their businesses.
- The training program and manual content will:
 - Address the barriers individuals with Autism face in the employment recruitment and induction process;
 - Provide recommendations on how to foster an inclusive culture in the workplace;
 - Provide best practices to support individuals on the job through accommodations and mentoring; and
 - Include input, insight, and presentations from individuals with Autism.

Step IV: Conduct free employer trainings utilizing the Employer Manual in Los Angeles and Sacramento Counties (will begin March, 2020)

Implement the training program with the goal of better equipping prospective employers with the tools to effectively integrate those with Autism into the workplace in a way that helps to ensure job retention, as well as promotion.

Step V: Pilot program results will inform best practices (to be completed March 31, 2021)

An evaluation and assessment of the training program's effectiveness will be conducted and a report shall be prepared and submitted to the Legislature.

Step VI: Looking Forward: Plans to disseminate to a wider statewide audience of employers and young adults with Autism

This project will provide a foundation for developing relationships with employers and impacting employer understanding of the ability and underuse of adults with Autism in the workforce. The training model has the potential to reach a substantial number of employers statewide, and to be regionally adapted to bring about system-wide changes that minimize the barriers to employment that continue to keep Californians with Autism from achieving success in their professional lives.

- 4) Can any additional information about the employers to be trained under the project, such as who they are, their industry type, etc. be provided?

Answer: No specific employers have been named, however, at a minimum, 24 employers in Los Angeles and Sacramento counties (12 each) will receive training. It is anticipated that trainings will be offered to employers cutting across multiple industry sectors and employer sizes.

- 5) Is Meristem agreeable to a third-party, program evaluation?

Answer: Yes. Meristem understands that the third-party evaluation is a requirement/condition of the pilot program.