NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Pete Ricketts, Governor

2018 – 2020 Vocational and Life Skills Grant Program

Applications due: March 5, 2018

Description of Program

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) is soliciting applications for vocational and life skills training programs to provide services to participants. Participants include a state inmate, parolee, felony probationer or former state inmate or felony probationers up to 18 months after his/her discharge from a state prison, parole or state probation. Successful applicants will be capable of training this target population during and/or after release. Individuals receiving vocational and life skills training during incarceration are more prepared to make significant strides toward a more positive reintegration to the community immediately upon release. Programs that deliver services inside and connect individuals to services on the outside further enhance the likelihood of successful reentry. These programs aid the department in increasing public safety, effectively reducing recidivism, providing meaningful vocational and life skills training, and facilitating the successful reentry as individuals return to their communities. Applicants must be able to identify how their program/services directly connect the participants with meaningful employment.

Eligibility

Applicants are limited to community-based organizations, community colleges, federally recognized or state recognized Indian tribes, or nonprofit organizations that provide vocational and life skills programming and services to our participants. Participants include a state inmate, parolee, felony probationer or former state inmate or felony probationers up to 18 months after his/her discharge from a state prison, parole or state probation. The department, in awarding grants, shall give priority to programs, services, or training that results in meaningful employment. This includes programs that provide verifiable degrees, certifications or credentials, which give the participant credibility in the job market.

Deadline and Contact Information

Applicants must submit their applications in PDF format with all required supporting documentation to Kevin Hand at kevin.hand@nebraska.gov no later than Monday, March 5th, at 5:00 p.m. For questions regarding the application or application submission contact Kevin Hand at 402-479-5813.

Table of Contents

Section 1
Timeline 2

Section 2
Data and Meeting Requirements 3-5

Section 3
Application Instructions & Application 6-7

Section 4
Program Narrative 8-10

Section 5
Budget Summary and Narrative 10-12

Section 6
References 13

Section 7
NAC Title 71, Chapter 1 14-15

Section 8
General Information about Post-Grant Award Reporting Requirements 16-17

Section 1

Timeline

January 26th, 2018	Grant Announcement – Seeking Applicants
March 5th, 2018	Grant Applications Due
March 5th – May 4th, 2018	Review, Evaluation, Scoring of Applications
May 11th, 2018	Notification of Grant Awards

Section 2

Program Evaluation Components/Requirements

Program evaluations will be conducted by the Nebraska Center for Justice Research at the University of Nebraska at Omaha to identify how programs meet the objectives of obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment.

The evaluation portion of the grant is funded through NDCS. Evaluation expenses are not necessary or allowable in the grant proposal. Information from the evaluations and data collection procedures employed under this grant may help your program secure additional outside funding in the future.

Evaluation Expectations

Programs must comply with evaluation procedures. This requires the ability to use a data management system and work within set data protocols. In addition to the list below, other evaluation related activities may be added as needed. See attached (VLS Data Tracking & Evaluation attachment). Each applicant will be required to include a data accuracy plan as well as a description of how you will meet all data timeline requirements. Failure to comply with evaluation and/or data requirements may result in a loss of partial or all funding.

I. Training on Performance Measures and Data Collection

NDCS will provide and grantees are required to attend training on program outcome and performance measures during which the training will assist the grantee in developing a program logic model and discuss the benefits and limitations of their data and how it will be used in the evaluation. UNO evaluators will provide training on how to gather, store and report program data. The UNO evaluation team will provide training and address concerns from programs as needed.

II. Site Visits

Evaluators will tour each program at the beginning of the grant period after trainings are provided on performance measures and data collection procedures. Program staff will provide evaluators with an overview of the program, including current data collected, as well as any materials given or collected during the program (intake forms, surveys, program handbooks, fliers, et al.). The UNO research coordinator will be available for additional site visits as needed to provide help with any questions or concerns with the data collection process.

III. Program Data Collection

Training will be provided on the data collection procedures and data will be submitted on an ongoing basis. Programs will be provided a user subscription (at no cost to the grantee) to an online data management system, QuickBase, where required participant data is to be submitted. Data must be submitted exactly as requested in this format. Programs that have other data tracking procedures will need to submit required data in the correct format to the online data management system before established due dates. Data monitoring may occur monthly, or as frequently as needed, to ensure that all of the required information can be gathered with minimal additional impact on program staff and resources. Evaluation staff will be available as needed to help with any data questions or concerns. Program staff may also work with the evaluation staff to submit any additional program data that is not a part of the required list of variables. Additional data on participants will be collected from other sources to measure recidivism and employment outcomes (e.g., official agency data, employers). This required list of variables may change if needed for specific evaluation requirements.

The following variables must be collected for each participant in the program and uploaded monthly to the data management system or more often if participant information changes.

Social Security Number	Information on Established Program Areas
Current or Most Recent Inmate ID Number	Location of Program Area
First and Last Name	Program Area Start and End Dates
Demographic Information to Include: Sex, Race, Ethnicity, Marital Status, Education Level	Program Area Status
Intake and Exit Status	Reason Program Area was Incomplete
Program Start and End Date	Reason Program Ended
Additional Program Information if Participant Returns to Programming	Additional Information as Needed

Programs will be required to address any data concerns during monthly or quarterly data pulls from the online data management system. In addition to the required data for participants, grantees will also be required to update evaluators on any changes to programming. This process will include quarterly updates and quarterly program update forms.

Additionally, grantees will be asked to provide information to NDCS as needed.

VLS Meeting Requirements

Each grantee will be required to have a representative from their organization at the vocational and life skills quarterly meetings and bi-monthly roundtable meetings. The VLS quarterly meetings will be held in either Omaha or Lincoln. The VLS bi-monthly roundtable meetings are held in Omaha for the grantees from Omaha and surrounding areas and in Lincoln for the grantees in Lincoln and surrounding areas. The roundtable meetings may be hosted by VLS grantees and NDCS as availability permits. The host of the roundtable meeting schedules and facilitates the roundtable meeting. Hosting is not a requirement.

Section 3

Application Instructions

1. Providers who wish to submit an application shall complete the application form, program narrative, budget summary and narrative, and references (Sections 4-6)
2. Completed grant application forms (Sections 3, 4, 5 & 6) shall be emailed in pdf format to Kevin Hand, Vocational & Life Skills Coordinator at kevin.hand@nebraska.gov Supplemental information such as brochures, research, and data may be attached as pdf files.
3. Applications are due no later than 5:00PM Central Standard Time, March 5th, 2018
4. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated from March 5th, 2018 through May 4th, 2018. During the review process a representative of NDCS may contact the provider for further information.
5. Providers that have been selected may be required to meet with the grant review team prior to final award notification. Notification will be provided on or before May 11, 2018.
6. Questions regarding the application may be directed to Kevin Hand via e-mail or by phone at (402) 479-5813.

Application

In submitting this grant application, I hereby certify that:

1. I have received sections 1-8 of the NDCS Vocational and Life Skills Grant Application.
2. Attached to this application form are completed sections 3, 4, 5 and 6.
3. This grant application is submitted by, or on behalf of, the party that will be responsible for the delivery of services should a grant be awarded.
4. The provider, if selected, will comply with the requirements set forth in NAC Title 71, Chapter 1, the application and the terms and conditions.
5. All information provided is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge.

_____

Signature of Authorized Official Date

Name of Signatory: _____

Applicant/Organization: _____

Title: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____

_____

_____

Section 4

Program Narrative

Please follow the outline described below adhering to the following headings/questions. Each application will be scored on the thoroughness and applicability of responses provided for each section listed below. Please pay attention to the number of points allocated to each section, as not all items are weighted equally.

A. **Organization Information (non-scored)**
   - Organization Name
   - Primary Contact/Title
   - Phone
   - Email
   - Website Address
   - Governing Structure

B. **Organization Mission (non-scored)**
   - Provide your organization's mission statement and describe how your organization's mission relates to increasing public safety and reducing recidivism.

C. **Experience with Target Population (20 points)**
   - Describe your organization's experience working with individuals who are incarcerated, on parole, under the supervision of State Probation or individuals who have held one or more of those statuses within the past 18 months.
   - If your organization has not previously worked with this population explain the current client population and how the skills and opportunities provided to these individuals can meet the special needs of clients with current or previous criminal justice system involvement.

D. **Experience with Evidence-Based Practices/Programs (EBP) (10 points)**
   - Describe your organization's definition of EBP
   - Describe your organization's experience delivering EBP. This should include descriptions of specific program delivered and/or practices utilized for use with your clients.

E. **Program Description (50 points)**
   - Describe in detail the proposed program, to include:
     - What services will be delivered
     - How services will be delivered
     - Where services will be delivered
     - What verifiable degrees, certifications or credentials do you provide
       - Describe how they will give credibility to participants in the job market

    - Duration of the program
    - What research or data supports this program
    - Explain the specific learning objectives or outcomes participants will meet through your program
    - Provide a flowchart or other graphic depiction of how clients progress through your program, from intake to completion
  - Describe the criteria for participants' successful completion of your organization's program and provide the current successful completion rate for your clients.

F. **Program Relevance (30 points)**
  - Identify how this program relates to the objectives of preparing individuals for employment as they reenter the community, through which recidivism is lowered.
  - Identify how this program relates to obtaining and maintaining employment:
    - Process for matching a participant in a job relevant to their skills
    - Employment retention strategies for participants

G. Relevance to the Nebraska job market (20 points)
  - Explain how the proposed program relates to the overall job market needs in Nebraska (provide relevant statistics).
  - Provide the current rate of employment in Nebraska for individuals who have successfully completed your program (if existing program).
  - Describe partnerships or other connections you maintain with employers in the community who are willing to provide employment opportunities to program participants.

H. Collection of Data and Evaluation of Effectiveness (10 points)
  - Data collection requirements are identified in Section 2 of the grant announcement.
  - Describe your data accuracy plan and how you intend to provide timely and accurate data using QuickBase.
  - Describe in detail what additional data your organization will collect to show that you have provided the services and accomplished the goals, how it will be collected and how it will be evaluated.
  - Describe how your organization will be able to track and report this information.
  - If this is an existing program, provide examples of performance measures that would be appropriate for your programming.

I. Current Status and Funding of Program (10)
  - Indicate whether the proposed program currently exists or will be developed as a new program from the funds received under this grant.
  - If existing, please identify how the program is currently funded.

- If new, please describe how the program will become self-sufficient, or work toward self-sufficiency, so it can continue in the absence of future grant funding.
- If existing, add data that supports program success.

Section 5

Budget Summary and Narrative

Complete each of the following sections applicable to this grant request by providing the required financial information and a narrative as to how this budget item will be used in meeting the grant objectives. Grant funds cannot be used for construction.

A. **Personnel** – list each position by title and name of employee, if available. Show the annual salary rate and the estimated percentage of time to be devoted to the project. Compensation paid for employees engaged in grant activities must be consistent with that paid for similar work within the applicant organization.

Name/Position	Annual Salary	Estimated % Time Devoted	Grant Amount

B. **Fringe Benefits** – Fringe benefits should be based on actual known costs or an established formula. Fringe benefits are for the personnel listed in budget category (A) and only for the percentage of time devoted to the Project.

Name/Position	Annual Benefits	Estimated % Time Devoted	Grant Amount

C. **Travel** – Itemize travel expenses of project personnel by purpose (e.g. staff to training, advisory group meeting, secondary work location). Show the basis of computation (e.g. 2 people attending 2 days training at $X lodging, $X meals, $X mileage). Indicate source of Travel Policies applied and are they in accordance with Federal Travel Regulations (http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104790).

Purpose of Travel	Location	Item	Computation	Grant Amount

D. **Supplies** – List items by type (office supplies, postage, training materials, copying paper, books, and expendable equipment costing less than $1500).

Supply Items	Computation	Grant Amount

E. **Consultants/Contracts** –

Consultant Fees - For each consultant enter the name, if known, service to be provided, hourly or daily fee, and estimated time on the project. Consultant fees in excess of $450 per day require additional justification and prior approval from the NDCS.

Name of Consultant	Service Provided	Computation	Grant Amount

Contracts – Provide a description of the product or service to be procured by contract and an estimate of the cost. Applicants are encouraged to promote free and open competition in awarding contracts. A separate justification must be provided for sole source contracts in excess of $50,000.

Item	Location	Computation	Grant Amount

F. **Other Costs** – List items (e.g. telephone, reproduction, rent) by major type and the basis of computation. For example, computation would identify the square footage and the cost per square foot for rent or a monthly rental cost and how many months to rent.

Description	Computation	Grant Amount

Budget Summary

Category	Grant Amount
A. Personnel	
B. Fringe Benefits	
C. Travel	
D. Supplies	
E. Consultants/Contracts	
F. Other Costs	
Total Project Costs:	

Section 6

References

References: Provide three (3) professional references. Include contact information and context of relationship (e.g., contractual agreements, provided/received services, et al.) for each.

Reference 1

Organization:	
Primary Contact:	
Primary Contact's Title:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Context of Relationship:	

Reference 2

Organization:	
Primary Contact:	
Primary Contact's Title:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Context of Relationship:	

Reference 3

Organization:	
Primary Contact:	
Primary Contact's Title:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Context of Relationship:	

TITLE 71 – DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Chapter 1 – Rules and Regulations

001 Rules relating to the administration of the Vocational and Life Skills Program. Under provisions of Legislative Bill 907, One-hundred third Legislature, Second Session, 2014, the following rules and regulations shall govern the procedures for the NDCS Vocational and Life Skills Program.

001.01 Definitions

001.01A Grant Recipient – shall mean a qualifying provider with a qualifying program as defined in Section 001.02

001.01B Department – shall mean the Department of Correctional Services

001.01C Vocational Training – shall mean an organized training provided with the intended result of learning a job skill and obtaining employment

001.01D Life Skills Training – shall mean an organized training provided with the intended result of preparing an individual for employment

001.01E Participant – shall mean a state inmate, parolee, felony probationer or former state inmate or felony probationer up to 18 months after his/her discharge from a state prison, parole or state probation

001.02 Qualified Provider

To be eligible, the provider and program must meet at least one of the requirements 001.02A-D and at least one of the requirements in 001.02E-F

001.02A The provider must be a community-based organization

001.02B The provider must be a community college

001.02C The provider must be a federally-recognized or state-recognized Indian tribe

001.02D The provider must be a non-profit organization

001.02E The provider's proposed program must provide vocational training with the desired result of participant employment

001.02F The provider's proposed program must provide life skills training with the desired result of participant employment

001.03 Grant Application Process

The grant application must include at least the following information; the Department may request additional information in the application or following submission of the application:

- A description of the provider and its primary function
- A description of the program for which funds are being requested
- A plan for collecting data and evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed program
- A detailed budget for the program, including requested funds and other funds used for the same program

001.04 Award Limits

The Department will determine the grant award based on the grant recipient's application and ability to meet the program objectives.

001.05 Disbursements

Vocational and Life Skills Program grants shall be disbursed as outlined in the grant announcement and grant award document. Grant awards may be increased up to the full amount requested if additional funds are available during the fiscal year.

001.06 Performance Requirements

The grant recipient shall submit reports (including financial reports meeting the requirements outlined in the grant award document and special conditions) to the Department on a quarterly basis and a final performance report upon completion of the grant award cycle. The reports shall include, but are not limited to, the following components. Monitoring of the project is required.

- The types of programming
- The cost per participant for the program, service or training provided
- The number of participants served, including the number of participants who successfully completed the program
- The effectiveness of the program or progress toward evaluation of same

001.06A The Department will monitor the progress of the program in accordance with grant requirements. The Department shall conduct site audits regularly and review business records pertaining to the awarded program and general accounting practices of the grant recipient.

001.07 Fund Disposal

The Department shall retain any funds not distributed to community-based organizations, community colleges, federally-recognized or state-recognized Indian tribes or nonprofit organizations for future distribution. These funds shall not be used for any purpose other than grant awards to providers.

Section 8

General Information about Post – Grant Award Reporting Requirements

This grant is based on a reimbursement plan for all grant approved monthly expenses. NDCS will make payment to grantee when invoice and proper documentation has been received. The monthly expense reporting is due by the 15th of the following month. However, in June of each year for the fiscal year end close, all May or earlier month expenses will be due no later than June 8th. Normal payment to grantee is due within 45 days, with accurate and all reporting requirements being fulfilled.

Terms and Conditions of Award:

A. This grant shall be in effect for the designated period of July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2020, unless otherwise terminated or suspended by NDCS.
B. Total grant funding is contingent upon the continued appropriation of FY 18/19 and FY 19/20 VLS grant funds.
C. The terms and conditions of award and budget may be modified only by written amendment, executed by both parties.
D. Program and financial records will be maintained in accordance with the Secretary of State Record Retention Schedule 124 (http://www.sos.ne.gov/records-management/pdf/124-state-agencies-general-records-20141230.pdf).
E. The Grantee assures NDCS the grant funded program will be conducted and adhered to in accordance with all applicable state/federal statutes and regulations.
F. Administration and performance of the project shall be executed in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat 83-904 and Nebraska Administrative Code Title 71, Chapter 1, Vocational and Life Skills Program.
G. Grantee will work in coordination with NDCS and UNO to evaluate program's efficiency and effectiveness.
H. Participation in program visitation and evaluation by and under the direction of NDCS will be supported by the grantee.
I. Services must be based upon grant proposed program.
J. Grantee shall make its employees aware of the provisions in Neb. Rev. Stat 28-322.01 through 28-322.03 providing it is a felony for individuals working for or under contract with the Department of Correctional Services to engage in sexual contact or penetration with an inmate or parolee, and that no inmate nor parolee is legally capable of giving consent to any such relationship.
K. Grantee is required to ensure work eligibility status of their employees using the E-Verify Program, or an equivalent federal program designated by the United States department of Homeland Security or other federal agency authorized to verify the work eligibility status.
L. Grantee shall comply with all applicable local, State, and Federal statutes and regulations regarding civil rights laws and equal opportunity employment (Neb. Rev. Stat. §48-1101 to 48-1125).
M. NDCS will conduct criminal background checks on all grantee staff members who wish to enter facilities. Grantees are encouraged to employ individuals with criminal histories. Criminal records will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and grantee staff will not be denied access based solely on their criminal record. Each employee will need to submit paperwork yearly, for annual background verification.
N. Grantee will comply with all fiscal and data evaluation reporting requirements listed in the grant announcement. Other data may be requested as determined through the program evaluation process.

O. Grantee will attend all program evaluation training offered by NDCS or UNO unless approved otherwise by NDCS.
P. Grantee will attend all Quarterly meetings and roundtable meetings. At least one representative from your organization must be in attendance at these meetings.
Q. The grantee shall submit a State of Nebraska Substitute Form W-9 & ACH Enrollment Form for the purpose of payment on expenses.
R. The grantee may request reimbursement monthly, July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2020, by submitting appropriate documentation (see S.) by the 15th of each month. With exception to the month of June. The due date for any reimbursements for the month of May or prior will be due June 8th.
S. All expenses must be previously approved budget items from the grant application.
T. Monthly documentation must include clear accounting documentation to include general ledgers, employee time sheets, payroll registers, itemized invoices, copies of invoices and comparable documents for all purchases and proof of payment. Provide documentation of names and positions of the people paid by the grant.
U. All travel must be documented including dates, mileage, start and stop locations, purpose of trip, signature of person traveling and approval. Provide a copy of detailed receipts with the documentation to support the travel expense, a credit card receipt that just shows a total is not acceptable. No alcohol can be on any receipts for expense of meals.
V. Rent payments must have a copy of the lease sent with the initial request and then invoices to support the monthly charges.
W. Copies of utility and phone bills should only be the billing page documenting the total and not the itemized bill showing each individual charge.
X. Grantee shall scan and submit all grant payment documents electronically to: Natasha.haupt@nebraska.gov, Timothy.pendrell@nebraska.gov and kevin.hand@nebraska.gov along with an updated NDCS Grant Financial Report.
Y. Grantee shall provide documentation for all equipment purchased at a unit cost of $1500 or more and all computers, tablets, or phones purchased with grant funds. This equipment will be considered NDCS inventory and placed on the NDCS fixed asset inventory. All fixed asset inventory items must be returned to NDCS at the end of the grant period.
Z. If grant funds are not expended in accordance with the instruction of the proposed grant program, NDCS may require that all grant funds or any portion thereof be returned by a means to be determined by NDCS.
AA. NDCS will not cover any legal fees.
BB. NDCS will not reimburse and medical or pharmacy expenses for program participants.
CC. New grantees may request salaries and benefits in advance for the first month of the program. To request such, the grantee shall submit a letter listing estimated salaries and benefits by position for the month. Other expenses for the first month will be submitted for reimbursement as described in R. above.

Vocational and Life Skills Program

Data Tracking and Evaluation

The evaluation of the Vocational and Life Skills (VLS) Program is an essential part of sharing the success of each grantee program and the overall success of the VLS program. Legislative Bill 907 (2014) mandates that the VLS program is evaluated and that this evaluation shows that participants are gaining vocational and life skills that will help them successfully reenter society. The ultimate goal of LB 907 is for this program to help individuals not just find jobs, but to find meaningful employment.

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) relies on grantees to be both willing and efficient partners of the VLS program and the University of Nebraska, Omaha (UNO) evaluation process. We are proud of the teamwork the VLS program currently produces and expect nothing less. We want all stakeholders to see and hear about the success our participants have through the VLS program and your part in this process is essential.

For all grantees awarded grants for Cycle 3 of the Vocational and Life Skills program there will be an orientation day and training on the evaluation and use of QuickBase, the data collection tool adopted by the VLS program. Evaluation training will include follow-up meetings to cover data reporting requirements for grantees.

1. **Evaluation Plans**:

    - For grant cycle 3 UNO will work with NDCS and grantees to systematically develop grantee-specific evaluation plans
    - The plans will Include a logic model with program inputs, outputs, short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes

2. **Data Collection and Reporting with QuickBase** (QuickBase is the data collection tool currently being used to capture all data for the VLS program)

    Evaluators at UNO (University of Nebraska at Omaha) are responsible for data quality assurance and will pull data for regular reporting needs.

    Grantees will meet these evaluation requirements by:

    - Attending bi-monthly roundtable and quarterly meetings
    - Entering all necessary participant data into QuickBase for monthly and/or quarterly data pulls as required from evaluation plan
    - Providing a quarterly update report on programming with a provided template
    - Participating in an update call with evaluators quarterly

3. **Performance Measures:**

- Grantees will be required to adopt performance measures that track the quantity of performance for all major program areas
- Grantees will potentially be required to adopt performance measures that track the quality (e.g. satisfaction) of performance for all major program areas
- All required performance measures will be approved by NDCS, UNO, and grantees
- The primary intent of performance measures is to provide performance benchmarks for both grantees and NDCS
- Performance measures will include the following information:
  - Numbers served
  - Percentage successfully completed
  - Length of programming
  - Participant satisfaction with programming (via surveys or other measures)
  - Meeting evaluation requirements (attending meetings, providing data, etc.)
  - Each grantee will have additional performance measures developed from program evaluation plans

4. **Surveys:**

- Each grantee will integrate prescribed survey collection techniques into their program to satisfy their evaluation plan.

5. **Other Evaluation Activities**

- Appropriate qualitative data collection techniques will be included in each grantee's evaluation plan, including one or more of the following:
  - Interviews with participants from grantee programs
  - Interviews with grantee staff
  - Success stories from participants and/or grantee staff