2022 NDCS- Vocational and Life Skills

Applications due: September 2, 2022

Description of Program
The purpose of the Vocational and Life Skills (VLS) solicitation is to provide funding to deliver reentry programs and supports to individuals during and after incarceration to further the NDCS mission to keep people safe. Awards may be made to multiple organizations. Awardees will be selected based on the ability to provide reentry support and programming, based in part on experience with the population and evidence-based practices. All awards will be made based on an annual budget amount evenly distributed throughout the fiscal year. The grant award will be in effect for three fiscal years and each annual amount must be used by June 30, 2023, 2024, and 2025, respectively. First year grant funds are available October 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022 and may include one-time costs, if appropriate. Subsequent years are July through June.

Statutory Authority
Awards under this solicitation are authorized pursuant to Section 28 of LB 1012 (2022) wherein a total of $15M, ($5M each year, starting July 1, 2022, and ending July 1, 2024) is allocated to the Vocational and Life Skills fund to provide grants to organizations who deliver programs that result in meaningful employment, reentry or transitional housing, wrap-around services, family support or restorative justice programming. The VLS program is promulgated in the Nebraska Administrative Code, Title 71, Chapter 1.

Program-Specific Information
NDCS takes a holistic approach to reentry and recognizes that supporting a person’s return to the community must be individualized in approach and delivery. Priority areas of consideration under this solicitation include:

- case coordination;
- behavioral health services;
- access to communication, transportation, and technology;
- housing preparation – items and funds to set up a residence;
- peer prevention and intervention; and
- family reunification.

Applicants are expected to employ best practices in reentry, utilizing evidence-based, research-informed approaches. Applicants shall consider other resources in the community and prevent duplication of services. For example, individuals diagnosed with a serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) may qualify for case coordination and medication management via Medicaid funds. This should be considered when determining the number of individuals the applicant can serve.

While this solicitation is not specific to transitional housing, proposals that include housing will be considered. Awardees are required to monitor individuals and collect data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the
program/service. Data tracking on participation/completion will be entered into the NDCS data management system.

Funds are not set aside to evaluate programs and activities under this solicitation; therefore, applicants must fully explain how they will measure and evaluate program outcomes. This work should be included in the applicants’ budget.

**Eligibility**

To qualify for this grant funding, the applicants must be community–based organizations, community colleges, federally recognized or state recognized Native American tribes, or nonprofit organizations. Applicants must demonstrate clean and safe spaces with the capacity to house the number of participants to be served. Applicants must currently be, or demonstrate the ability to be, a registered service provider for State Probation.

**Data Collection and Reporting**

This grant requires the grantee to report the number of program participants, type of programming participants received during their stay, cost per participant and the number of participants who successfully completed programming. NDCS may require additional information, including but not limited to participant contact information, success stories and challenges.

**Program Payment**

Upon each reimbursement request, applicant agrees to submit documentation that verifies that all services are rendered as outlined in the grant application and agree to submit any additional documentation as requested by NDCS. Applicant is required to bill on a monthly basis for services rendered. Payment will be within 45 days after receipt of said documents and monthly billing.

**Billing on a Monthly Basis/Rate for Services Rendered**

This may be a rate per person, per class/activity/intervention, etc., or based on meeting defined objectives each month, etc.

Justification for the amount must be in sufficient detail so as to confirm the amount is reasonable and appropriate. During the review and evaluation process, NDCS will request any additional or clarifying information as needed.

**Grant Award Financial Reporting Requirements** *(subject to change as presented with award notification)*

NDCS will make payment to the grantee when the invoice and proper documentation have been received. The monthly invoice shall be submitted by the 15th of the following month and within 60 days of the service provision. At the close of each fiscal year, all expenses through May 31st must be submitted no later than June 8th. Normal payment is due within 45 days of receipt of accurate and complete billing information.
Terms and Conditions of Award:

A. This grant shall be in effect for the designated period of September 15, 2022 - June 30, 2025, unless otherwise terminated or suspended by NDCS.

B. Total grant funding is contingent upon the continued appropriation of these funds in FY 24 and FY 25.

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.

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 the evaluators to evaluate the 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 a 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 Nebraska 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 NCJR 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. Grantees will have safeguards in place to prohibit employees from using their positions for personal gain or conflicts in interest.

S. All expenses must be previously approved budget items from the grant application.

T. Grantee shall scan and submit all grant payment documents electronically to: DCS.VLSGrants@nebraska.gov along with an updated NDCS Grant Financial Report.
U. If grant funds are not expended in accordance with the instruction and terms and conditions 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.

V. Only the organization will be reimbursed; individuals will not be reimbursed.

W. Grantees are subject to an annual or biennial review by NDCS staff and are required to submit requested information. NDCS will notify grantees in advance of the review and documentation that is necessary.

X. The grantee shall submit a signed Drug Free Workplace policy.

**Deadline and Contact Information**

Applicants must submit their applications in PDF format with all required supporting documentation to NDCS at DCS.VLSGrants@nebraska.gov no later than September 2, 2022, at 5:00 P.M. For questions regarding the application or application submission, contact Tony Britten at 402-479-5545.

**Timeline**

- **August 2, 2022** Grant Announcement – Seeking Applicants
- **September 2, 2022** Grant Applications Due
- **September 2 – September 21, 2022** Review, Evaluation of Applications
- **September 28, 2022** Notification of Grant Awards
- **October 1, 2022** Funds available

**Application Instructions**

1. Providers who wish to submit an application shall submit the application cover page, program proposal, budget, budget summary and references.

2. Completed grant applications shall be emailed in PDF format to NDCS at DCS.VLSGrants@nebraska.gov. Supplemental information such as brochures, research, and data may be attached as PDF files.

3. Applications are due no later than 5:00 P.M. on September 2, 2022.

4. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated from September 2, 2022 to September 21, 2022. During the review process, a representative of NDCS may contact the applicant for further information.

5. Applicants 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 September 28, 2022.

6. Questions regarding the application may be directed to Tony Britten at anthony.britten@nebraska.gov or by phone at (402) 479-5545.
In submitting this grant application, I hereby certify that:

1. I have received the NDCS Vocational and Life Skills Transitional Housing solicitation.
2. Attached to this application form are all required documents.
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: _____________________________________________

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Program Proposal

Using the headings below, provide a written proposal for your program. Submission must be 12 pt font, double spaced, and single-sided.

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.

Introduction (Brief)

- Introduce the applicant agency and key partners, summarizing relevant organizational history. This includes organization name, governing structure, outlines current programs and activities, primary contact/title, phone, email, and website address (if available).

- State your organization’s mission, goals and plans. Describe how your organization’s mission, goals, and plans relate to increasing public safety and reducing recidivism.

Problem/Need statement

- Describe the need the applicant’s program fills in the service area in which the project would be implemented, including location, population, and demographic information.

Experience with Target population

- 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. Identify the target population and state how the target population would benefit from the applicant’s services.

Program Description
Describe in detail the proposed program, to include:

- Goals and objectives of the program
  - A minimum of 2 goals with 3 measurable objectives for each is required
  - Monthly benchmarks must be included to accompany invoice

- Specific service to be delivered, including but not limited to:
  - Curriculum
  - Activities/interventions
  - Evidence or research to support program delivery
  - Length of program
  - Program completion

- Criteria and method for determining client eligibility (e.g., screening tools, eligibility requirements, etc.)

- Projected number of people to receive services
• Specific activities/interventions that will assist individuals in moving toward self-empowerment and sufficiency while participating in the program. (For example, obtaining employment counseling, education, occupational training, establishing financial literacy, etc.).

• Personnel management plan, including staff participating in, or supporting the program.
  o Describe their roles and contributions

Data Collection, Reporting and Evaluation
This grant requires the applicant to report number of program participants, type of programming participant received during their stay, cost per participant. In addition, the grantee must provide program evaluation to demonstrate effectiveness.

  • Describe your agency’s experience with collecting data and overseeing data collection.
  • List sources of data your organization currently collects to demonstrate service provision and goal attainment.

Program Budget
Include a three-year, annual program budget, not to exceed $??, with a projected number of participants to be served and the cost per participant.

  • Budget must reflect annual costs for FY 23, 24, 25.
**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: |  |