

## CLARIFICATION # 1

# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION (RFQ) #8256 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND CONSULTING SERVICES

**TO:** All Bidders

**NOTICE:**

The following clarification is in response to questions submitted. The information contained herein supplements and/or supersedes the specific parts of the documents referred to in each item and shall be attached and becomes a part thereof. All other provisions shall remain in full force and effect as set forth on the original documents.

**NON-COMPLIANCE WARNING**

Incomplete, unsigned, modifications of forms or missing forms will **disqualify the proposal in its entirety**. The College will not request or accept corrections, substitutions, or supplemental forms after the submission deadline. Please **triple** check all your bid documents before submission.

---

**Question 1:** We noted that the RFQ allows consideration of nonregistered training programs. Could a provider propose a focused career-readiness and financial-capability component, or must every proposal cover the broader workforce pathway and employer-engagement requirements? If a limited scope is permitted, would the same employer-interest letters and comparable-project references be required?

**Answer:** Yes, a focused career readiness and financial Capability.

**Question 2:** Program Budget and Pricing Structure (Page 20): Does the College prefer a fixed cost per participant, or may respondents propose tiered pricing based on cohort size, training duration, and specialized instructional requirements?

**Answer:** All ETPL approved programs are based on Cost Per Participant.

**Question 3:** Allowable Program Expenses (Pages 4–6): Should proposed pricing account for all program-related expenses, including instructional personnel, training materials, equipment, certifications, participant stipends, transportation, and supportive services? Are any of these expenses expected to be provided or funded separately by the College?

**Answer:** No. Price should include instructional costs only.

**Question 4:** Enrollment and Training Capacity (Pages 4–6): Does the College have anticipated enrollment targets, preferred cohort sizes, or minimum instructional hours for proposed training programs? Understanding these expectations would help us establish realistic staffing, scheduling, and cost-per-participant projections.

**Answer:** Preferred cohort size minimum of 15, maximum of 20. Instructional hours based on the proposed training and credential

**Question 5:** Scope of Services, page 4: What funding source(s) will support contracts awarded under this RFQ? Is the College establishing a pre-qualified vendor pool for future grant-funded projects?

**Answer:** Yes. The College is establishing a pre-qualified vendor pool for future grant funded projects.

**Question 6: Scope of Services, page 4:** Does the College anticipate a target number of participants to be served under this RFQ, or a minimum or maximum number that proposers should be prepared to serve?

**Answer:** Not at this time. We are seeking a vendor pool for future projects.

**Question 7: Eligibility, pages 3 to 4:** Must participants be Essex County residents or Essex County College students? Will the College refer participants to selected vendors, or are proposers exclusively responsible for all recruitment?

**Answer:** Will be based on the requirement of the grant project.

**Question 8:** Is Essex Community College looking for external entities to develop pre-apprenticeship and/or apprenticeship programs that can be run through Essex Community College or the external entity?

**Answer:** Not at this time.

**Question 9:** Should bidders be prepared to serve as a Registered Apprenticeship sponsor, or will Essex Community College serve in that role?

**Answer:** If the bidder is a Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor it should be noted in the application.

**Question 10:** Are bidders expected to develop multiple pre-apprenticeship or apprenticeship programs or focus on only one occupation?

**Answer:** Not at this time.

**Question 11:** What information about budget will Essex Community College share?

**Answer:** There is no information to share at this time.

**Question 12:** For RFQ 8256, page 3 permits programs that are not registered apprenticeships. For a standalone virtual cybersecurity training proposal, do the employer-partnership and three New Jersey employer-letter requirements on pages 5–6 still apply, or may apprenticeship-specific sections be marked not applicable with an explanation?

**Answer:** Not applicable

**Question 13:** Virtual Culinary Training with Scheduled Commercial-Kitchen Labs  
*RFQ #8256 – Scope of Services / Program Design and Curriculum Development, Pages 4–5*

For a culinary workforce training program, is a model consisting primarily of live virtual culinary instruction, during which participants cook in their home kitchens under the instructor's live supervision, with scheduled in-person commercial-kitchen lab sessions, an acceptable training model? May the program be conducted during evening hours?

**Answer:** Will depend on grant requirements.

**Question 13:** Commercial-Kitchen Training Location *RFQ #8256 – Scope of Services / Program Design and Curriculum Development, Pages 4–5; Response Sheet, Question 7 – Program Location(s)*

May the in-person commercial-kitchen lab sessions be conducted in a licensed commercial kitchen secured by the provider through a rental or partnership arrangement? Additionally, does

Essex County College have a culinary or commercial-kitchen facility that may be available for scheduled use by selected training providers, or should proposers plan to secure their own commercial-kitchen location?

**Answer:** Yes. No ECC does have a culinary or commercial kitchen facility.

**Question 14:** Cohort Size *RFQ #8256 – Scope of Services / Program Design and Curriculum Development, Pages 4–5*

Does Essex County College require a minimum or maximum number of participants per training cohort, or may the proposer establish an appropriate cohort size based on the instructional model, level of supervision required, commercial-kitchen capacity, and participant learning needs?

**Answer:** Will be grant dependent.

**Question 15:** Participant Training Materials and Professional Equipment  
*RFQ #8256 – Submission Requirements / Budget and Scope of Services / Project Objectives, Page 4; Bid Price Form*

May required participant training materials and professional equipment—including culinary textbooks and workbooks, culinary tool/knife kits, required uniform items, food-safety instructional materials, and industry credential examination fees—be included in the proposed program cost and cost per participant when those items are required for participation in and completion of the training?

**Answer:** Maybe included

**Question 16:** Culinary Lab Ingredients and Consumable Supplies  
*RFQ #8256 – Submission Requirements / Budget, Page 4; Bid Price Form*

For a culinary workforce training program that includes live, supervised cooking from participants' home kitchens and scheduled commercial-kitchen lab sessions, may the proposed program cost include required food ingredients and culinary consumable supplies for both the virtual and commercial-kitchen portions of the program?

For the virtual cooking sessions, may require participant ingredients be provided through controlled or reloadable grocery cards or another College-approved purchasing method?

**Answer:** No. Students will not be reimbursed.

**Question 17:** ServSafe Manager Certification Examination Facility  
*RFQ #8256 – Scope of Services / Project Objectives, Page 4*

The proposed culinary workforce training program includes dedicated preparation for the ServSafe Manager certification examination. Does Essex County College have an appropriate computer lab or testing space that may be available for a scheduled, in-person proctored certification examination?

If College testing facilities are not available, may reasonable costs for an approved external testing facility and/or approved online proctoring be included in the proposed program cost?

**Answer:** Yes. Lab is available.

**Question 18:** Non-Registered Training Programs and Employer Letters  
*RFQ #8256 – Apprenticeships: Description of the Project, Page 3; Employer Engagement Plan and Demonstration of Employer Interest, Pages 5–6*

Page 3 states that the College is open to training programs that are not Registered Apprenticeships. Pages 5–6 require an Employer Engagement Plan and at least three letters of interest from New Jersey employers indicating willingness to participate in planning one or more apprenticeship programs.

For a proposer submitting a workforce training program that is not currently a Registered Apprenticeship, does the requirement for at least three employer letters still require each employer to commit specifically to participating in the development of a Registered Apprenticeship program, or may the letters document employer participation in the proposed non-registered training program, such as curriculum input, work-based learning, interviewing or hiring qualified participants, and development of future apprenticeship pathways?

**Answer:** No

**Question 19:** Registered Apprenticeship Development for Non-Registered Programs  
*RFQ #8256 – Apprenticeships: Description of the Project, Page 3; Plan and Timeline / Employer Engagement Plan, Pages 5–6; Registered Apprenticeship Status, Page 7*

If a non-registered workforce training program is selected, is the provider expected to pursue Registered Apprenticeship status during the one-year contract period? If so, does Essex County College provide technical assistance or coordination with the New Jersey Department of Labor or U.S. Department of Labor as part of that process?

**Answer:** No

**Question 20:** Program Staffing and Consultants

*RFQ #8256 – Organizational Capability, Page 5*

The RFQ requests the qualifications and relevant experience of lead staff and/or consultants responsible for carrying out the project. May the lead organization use qualified independent contractors or consultants for specialized instruction, program coordination, employer engagement, or other program-support functions? If so, are there additional subcontractor disclosures or approvals required at the proposal stage?

**Answer:** No

**Question 21:** Provider Approval or Licensure

*RFQ #8256 – Eligibility and Submission Requirements, Pages 3–4*

For a culinary workforce training program that is not currently a Registered Apprenticeship, is the selected provider required to hold or obtain any additional New Jersey training-provider designation, private career school approval, Eligible Training Provider status, or other program-specific authorization before contract award or before training begins?

**Answer:** ETPL status required

**Question 22:** Performance Measures

*RFQ #8256 – Assessment Methods / Organizational Evaluation, Page 5; Evaluation and Selection Criteria, Page 8*

Does Essex County College establish minimum performance targets for participant completion, industry credential attainment, employment placement, apprenticeship entry, and/or employment retention, or should proposers establish and justify their own proposed performance measures and targets?

**Answer:** ECC will implement all grant requirements.

**Question 23:** Multiple Cohorts During the Contract Period

*RFQ #8256 – Plan and Timeline for Producing High-Quality Deliverables, Page 5; Bid Price Form*

May a selected provider conduct multiple cohorts of the same approved workforce training program during the one-year contract period, based on College need and participant enrollment, or should the proposer identify and price the anticipated number of cohorts in the original proposal?

**Answer:** Yes, and is grant specific

**Question 24:** Was an addendum/addendum issued?

**Answer:** No.