

Mayor's Office of Employment Development

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RESERVOIR SQUARE
CAFÉ OPERATIONS AND
TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT
PROGRAM

Issued: August 17, 2026
Due: September 18, 2026

**Bidders Conference: September 1, 2026, 2-3:30 PM
(virtual)**

Register Here:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/fDq3NjnrQq>

**MacKenzie Garvin
Director
Mayor's Office of Employment Development**

**Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore**

CONTENTS

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND	3
OPERATOR QUALIFICATIONS	4
ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL QUALIFICATIONS.....	5
SUBCONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
TARGET POPULATION	6
SCOPE OF WORK	7
PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES.....	8
TERM AND RENEWAL	8
COST OF PREPARING PROPOSALS	9
PUBLIC RECORDS.....	9
CONTRACT AWARD.....	9
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS.....	9
LOCAL HIRING LAW INFORMATION.....	9
PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS	10
PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS	11
QUESTIONS	11
WITHDRAWALS	11
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE	12
PROPOSAL FORMAT	12
EVALUATION CRITERIA	15

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) is seeking proposals from an experienced social enterprise coffee operator to manage and operate a café and transitional employment program at its new headquarters and American Job Center at Reservoir Square. The selected operator will bring demonstrated expertise in café operations and workforce development and will be responsible for working in partnership with MOED to deliver a structured, supportive employment program for individuals facing significant barriers to employment. This partnership is intended to combine high-quality café operations with intentional workforce development outcomes, supporting participants in gaining skills, stability, and pathways to long-term employment.

BACKGROUND

MOED

MOED's mission is to deliver economic justice to Baltimore residents. To MOED, economic justice means creating an equitable workforce system that responds to all residents' needs and provides viable economic opportunities to all residents, especially those who have been generationally and systemically disadvantaged.

MOED administers the city's public workforce system and offers a broad menu of employment and training services to adults, youth and the business community. The agency has extensive experience administering transitional employment initiatives, including [the Hire Up program](#) funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, which served over 500 residents.

RESERVOIR SQUARE

MOED's new headquarters anchors the Reservoir Square redevelopment project in the 800 block of West North Avenue. The four-story, 63,000 square foot building will serve as home base for MOED's 250 employees and feature a state-of-the-art American Job Center which will serve up to 50,000 Baltimore City residents each year. The building is presently scheduled to open in fall 2026. The selected operator will enter into a lease agreement with the City of Baltimore as well as a contract with MOED to operate the café and provide transitional employment services.

Approximately 2,000 square feet on the first floor will be dedicated to the café, which will feature 26-28 seats. The space will be accessible from the main lobby during MOED business hours (8:30 AM-4:30 PM Monday through Friday) and from the street as negotiated in the lease agreement and/or operating contract. MOED may provide the selected operator with some operating equipment, as budget permits and as negotiated.

The building will have 75 parking spaces. Usage of the parking lot outside of MOED business hours, as well as the possibility of designating space(s) for café staff, will be negotiated. The location will be

served by the CityLink Gold and 85 bus routes, which stop directly in front of the building, and is located approximately a half mile from both the North Avenue light rail station and the Penn North metro stop.

FUNDING

No direct funding will be provided to the selected operator. MOED will support the transitional employment program by fully funding the wages of program participants, as well as ancillary expenses such as certifications, equipment, or clothing. Participants will also have access to MOED supportive service offerings, which include transportation, housing support, recovery services, childcare, and emergency funding.

MOED may leverage several funding sources to support the program as it develops, but primary funding will be provided through [Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#) funds designed to support adults and dislocated workers.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The selected operator will work closely with MOED to codesign, adjust, and improve the transitional employment program throughout the contract term. Ideally, the program will operate on a cohort model, with each cohort of 4-6 participants lasting approximately three months. The expectation is that MOED will recruit candidates and then provide case management services to participants throughout their transitional employment experience. The operator will make the final participant selection from among the candidates referred by MOED, and provide a training and workforce experience program that combines on-the-job café/hospitality experience with a curriculum emphasizing essential and transferable skills.

The program must provide measurable skills gains and *at least one* industry-recognized credential in accordance with the [WIOA Performance Indicators](#). [Guidance for identifying qualifying industry-recognized credentials](#) is available from the U.S. Department of Labor. MOED will additionally require that program participants complete both [ServSafe Food Handler](#) and [OSHA-10](#) training and certification. Additional credentials are preferred but not required. MOED is also interested in the potential for developing additional credentialing opportunities, such as hospitality supervisor certification, in partnership with the selected operator.

OPERATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Respondents **must** demonstrate the following qualifications:

- Minimum of three (3) years of experience operating a café location **required**; experience operating a café- or food-service based workforce program strongly preferred
- Strong human resources policies and practices
- Established internal systems for:
 - Inventory management
 - Financial oversight and reporting
- Good standing within the business and local community
- Proven ability to deliver trauma-informed care, supervision, and coaching

- Experience employing individuals with barriers through transitional or cohort-based employment models
- Willingness and capacity to collaborate closely with MOED on program development, outcomes measurement, and employment pathways within the café

MOED is particularly interested in operators who demonstrate the following:

- Capacity to scale operations, either through multiple locations or a clear expansion strategy
- Commitment to ethical sourcing, and/or sustainable procurement practices
- Locally owned or regionally based operations
- Strong history of community partnership and engagement
- Demonstrated impact in supporting marginalized or historically excluded communities

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL QUALIFICATIONS

All businesses/organizations must meet a minimum level of administrative and fiscal capacity in order to contract with MOED. Therefore, bidders must provide the following Documentation of Qualifications information as part of their application. Failure to satisfactorily provide the following documentation could result in disqualification of any proposed award.

- In good standing with the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation at time of proposal submission *<Must submit a current [certificate of good standing from the Department of Assessments and Taxation](#).>*
- Legal entity (Proof of Incorporation, 501c (3), etc.) *<Must submit document proving legal entity.>*
- Written personnel policies *<Must submit table of contents of personnel policies.>*
- Written conflict of interest policy for staff and board *<Must submit copy of Conflict of Interest Policy.>*
- Written grievance procedure for customers/clients *<Must submit copy of grievance procedure.>*
- Ongoing quality assurance process for services *<Must submit descriptions of process.>*
- For organizations with an annual budget of at least \$100,000 *<Must submit current annual budget document identifying the various sources and amounts.>*
- For organizations that have more than one revenue source *<Must submit revenue documentation identifying the various sources and amounts.>*
- Proven fiscal capacity including capacity for fund accounting. *<If the organization was audited within the past three years, the organization must submit a copy of the most recent formal audit completed within the last year. Must satisfactorily address all findings. If audited statement is unavailable, submit copies of unaudited financial statements for the three (3) most recently completed years.>*
- Verify that the program has procured and will maintain during the life of the agreement the following required insurance coverage: professional liability, errors and omissions; commercial general liability insurance, including contractual liability insurance; business automobile liability (if applicable); worker's compensation coverage; and employee dishonesty insurance *<Must submit copies of certificates of insurance. >*
- Adequate method to collect client information and demographics *<Must submit sample of format or report. >*

- Demonstrated ability to collect outcome data that measures performance to plan *<Must submit report showing actual to planned performance. >*
- A networked computer connected to the Internet with a browser that is compatible with any current cloud applications or databases required by MOED; the system should have a PDF reader, office applications compatible with the current version of Microsoft Excel and Word, and email accounts for all individuals accountable for this agreement or willingness and budget to acquire these technologies *<Must submit letter describing how organization currently addresses or plans to address these criteria.>*

SUBCONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Program success is contingent upon the ability of the awardee to meet the demands of managing and administering the initiative/service. With the advance written approval of MOED, the awarded organization may be permitted to subcontract specific activities, with conditions.

Subcontractor responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Oversight of subcontractors
2. Program operations and fiscal management
3. Monitoring/evaluation
4. Participant tracking and documentation
5. Timely billings and reports
6. Timely reporting of required data/information
7. Cooperation and coordination with MOED staff
8. Leveraged resources
9. Achieving outcomes stated in contract
10. Timely submission of participant incentive plan *(if budget includes funds for participant incentives)*
11. Timely submission of participant placement plan
12. Attendance at required meetings

TARGET POPULATION

The operator must have demonstrated experience supporting individuals facing barriers to employment, including but not limited to:

- Opportunity Youth
- Dislocated Workers
- Returning Citizens
- Long-term Unemployed or Underemployed Individuals
- Individuals in Recovery
- Individuals with Disabilities

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected operator will be responsible for both café operations and workforce development programming as outlined below.

A. Reporting & Partnership

- Participation in bi-weekly planning and performance meetings with MOED
- Submission of quarterly cohort reports
- Ongoing data tracking and reporting aligned with MOED requirements
- Registration and compliance within MOED-designated data systems (e.g., Maryland Workforce Exchange, Unite Us or successor platform)
- Collaboration on grant applications and funding opportunities
- Participation in broader MOED partnerships as needed

B. Café Operations

- Full daily café operations (minimum required days of operation per week to be determined in contract)
- Hiring, supervision, and management of permanent café staff
- Inventory management and Point of Sale (POS) systems oversight
- Customer service standards and experience management
- Financial management and operational sustainability
- Marketing and promotion of café operations
- Responsibility for upkeep, maintenance, and replacement coordination of café equipment (including any equipment initially provided by MOED)

C. Workforce Development Program Responsibilities

- Hiring and onboarding of participants recruited and referred by MOED case managers
- On-the-job supervision of transitional employees
- Implementation of coaching and performance improvement processes (including PIPs and termination decisions in alignment with agreed MOED protocols)
- Development and delivery of training curriculum
- Coordination of job readiness and technical skill-building
- Support for certifications and credentialing opportunities where applicable
- Structured scheduling that ensures subsidized staff receive a guaranteed minimum number of hours per week (to be defined in contract)

D. Community Engagement & External Partnerships

- Development of partnerships with local employers and workforce pipelines
- Outreach and engagement in surrounding neighborhoods, including bordering communities
- Active participation in community-based partnerships and initiatives
- Support for customer-facing community engagement strategies and programming

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

The subcontractor shall complete quarterly reports to describe progress in each aspect of the program. Reports will be required to be submitted to MOED early in the month following quarter closure. MOED will monitor program quality and accountability. In addition, MOED will meet with the operator on a biweekly basis to provide capacity building and continuous technical assistance, focusing on management techniques, effective service delivery, and maintenance of fiscal, performance, and general management. MOED will also conduct at least two formal program monitoring visits annually.

This program will be supported by WIOA funds and subject to the common WIOA Performance Measures:

- Education and Employment Rate: Percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit.
- Education and Employment Rate: Percentage of youth who are in education or training activities or in subsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit.
- Median Earnings: Median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit.
- Credential Attainment: Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma/GED during participation or within one year after exit.
- Measurable Skill Gains: Percentage of individuals who are in an education/ training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skills gains.
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers: Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit who were employed by the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit.

MOED will require quarterly reporting on these measures as well as follow-up reports three, six, and 12 months after participant exit or graduation from the program.

TERM AND RENEWAL

The contract term, including the start and end dates, will be aligned with the lease agreement and negotiated concurrently. MOED will propose an initial term of three years.

Renewal options will also be negotiated. MOED will propose that renewal be contingent on the operator's meeting performance goals.

COST OF PREPARING PROPOSALS

Costs for developing, preparing, and submitting proposals are solely the bidder's responsibility. MOED will not reimburse for such costs.

PUBLIC RECORDS

Applicants are advised that most documents in possession of MOED are considered public records and subject to disclosure under the Maryland Public Information Act.

CONTRACT AWARD

The successful subcontractor will enter into an agreement with MOED in a format to be determined by the City of Baltimore. Acceptance of the subcontractor's offer to perform the services specified herein will be made by written notice of award to the successful bidder. Thereafter, the future subcontractor and MOED shall enter into a written contract. The contract will incorporate the terms and conditions of this RFP, as well as any addendum issued, and the successful bidder's response to this RFP. Said contract must be approved by the Baltimore City Board of Estimates. The successful subcontractor must register in the City of Baltimore's Workday system at <https://wd1.myworkdaysite.com/supplier/baltimorecity/suppliersite>. Once registered, active contract holders will submit information to Workday at workdaysuppliers@baltimorecity.gov.

COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Any award of a contract under this RFP will be subject to applicable requirements of the funding sources, including the U.S. Department of Labor, the Maryland Department of Labor, and the City of Baltimore. These terms and conditions include, without limitation, provisions regarding reporting, insurance, indemnification, audits, nondiscrimination, minority and women's business enterprise requirements, conflict of interest and local hiring provisions.

LOCAL HIRING LAW INFORMATION

Article 5, Subtitle 27 of the Baltimore City Code, as amended on December 23, 2013 (the Local Hiring Law) and its rules and regulations apply to this RFP. The Local Hiring Law is posted in its entirety on the MOED website: <https://moed.baltimorecity.gov/employer-services/hiring-strategies-local>. The subcontractor's requirements are summarized below:

1. At least 51% of any new jobs required to complete this contract or project must be filled by Baltimore City residents.
2. Within two weeks of receiving notice of the Board of Estimates' approval of a City contract or City-subsidized project covered by the Law, the subcontractor must work with representatives from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development to complete an employment analysis that will project the total workforce and the "new hires" in the Baltimore area needed to fulfill the contract agreement.
3. If the subcontractor's workforce plan indicates a need to fill new jobs, the subcontractor must agree to post these positions through MOED and its One Stop Career Center Network for a period of seven days prior to publicly advertising the openings. The subcontractor shall also interview qualified Baltimore City residents referred from MOED; and unless granted a waiver, fill at least 51% of the new jobs required to complete the contract or project with Baltimore City residents. This will enable MOED to identify and refer qualified City residents to the subcontractor as candidates for these job opportunities.
4. Each subcontractor shall submit an Employment Report to MOED by the fifth day of each month throughout the duration of the contract or agreement
5. The subcontractor may submit a fully completed Bidder Waiver Request Form to waive or reduce the requirements under the Local Hiring Law. The request shall be submitted to:

John Ford

Local Hiring Law Project and Initiatives Specialist

Mayor's Office of Employment Development

Phone: (office) 443.984.3014 (direct) 410.396.9974

john.ford@baltimorecity.gov

<https://moed.baltimorecity.gov/employer-services/hiring-strategies-local>

6. MOED will grant or deny the waiver request after a review of the subcontractor's written explanation for the request. If the waiver is granted the subcontractor is still required to submit the Employment Report by the fifth day of each month for the duration of the contract.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All proposals must be received via email by 4:30 PM on September 18, 2026, and directed to moedrfp@baltimorecity.gov. Include "Reservoir Square Café Operations" in the subject line of the email.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the submitted proposal is complete and fully responsive to all RFP requirements. MOED reserves the right to deem nonresponsive any application that is incomplete and therefore ineligible for competitive review. Additionally, MOED may reject any or all proposals received and reserves the right to reissue or cancel in whole or in part this RFP if it is in the best interest of the agency to do so.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed in three stages.

First, MOED staff will review all proposals to determine whether they are fully responsive to requirements. Those that do not follow proposal formatting guidelines, provide all required materials, and/or satisfactorily address all required proposal elements will not proceed to the next review stage.

Second, responsive proposals will be reviewed by an impartial panel of subject matter experts according to the rubric provided in this RFP. At least two experts will review each proposal to arrive at a final score and make a recommendation whether the proposal should move forward.

Finally, for recommended proposals, MOED will require an *in-person* interview with the principal personnel identified in this application (Organization Head, Program Lead, Fiscal Contact, Alternate Contact, others as appropriate). **Bidders should be prepared to coordinate and/or attend an interview as soon as five business days after the application deadline.** Interviews will be scheduled via email from moedrfp@baltimorecity.gov.

QUESTIONS

Bidders are strongly encouraged to attend the virtual bidders' conference to learn more about the proposal process and ask any questions. The bidders' conference will be held on September 1, 2026 from 2-3:30 PM. Interested bidders should register to attend here: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/fDq3NJnrQg>. Slides from the bidders' conference will be posted on MOED's website, baltimorecity.gov/moed, after the event.

Otherwise, bidders with questions should submit them in writing to moedrfp@baltimorecity.gov. Bidders' questions should be specific and reference a specific section, page, and item of this solicitation. Any information resulting from questions that causes a change in the solicitation will be provided to all bidders. The last day to submit written questions will be September 7, 2026 .

All questions and answers, both from the bidders' conference and received in writing, will be posted on MOED's website, www.moed.baltimorecity.gov, by no later than September 10, 2026.

WITHDRAWALS

Bidders may withdraw their proposal within five business days of the submission deadline by sending a written request to moedrfp@baltimorecity.gov.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

RFP issued: August 17, 2026

Bidders Conference: September 1, 2026

Proposals due: September 18, 2026

Award announced on or about: October 5, 2026

Contract completed and approved by: January 15, 2027

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals must include:

- Cover page (use template provided)
- Abstract
- Proposal Narrative
- Documentation of Qualifications (see pg 5)
- **At least** two letters of reference demonstrating applicant's capacity to successfully conduct café operations and/or provide workforce development services, particularly to special populations experiencing barriers to employment. Potential references could include a current or former landlord, program participant, a current community partner or a vendor.
- **If subcontract is proposed**, letters of commitment from all proposed subcontractors.
- **Optional**: Additional letters of reference; additional attachments as needed.

APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Use template provided

ABSTRACT

The one-page abstract should summarize the proposed initiative, including a short description of the population to be served and participants' overall needs and demographics. Include a description of objectives and activities.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Respond to the following requests for information, limiting your responses to 20 pages, double-spaced using an 11-point Calibri font. **Please maintain the order, structure, and section headings outlined below throughout your proposal narrative.**

Section I: Organizational Operation

Required response elements:

Organizational Capacity

- Describe organizational history, including years in operation
- Note any major structural changes (mergers, leadership transitions, expansion, etc.)

Revenue Model

- Describe primary revenue streams and how the café is financially sustained
- Include explanation of how workforce programming is funded and integrated into the business model
- Provide evidence of strong financial controls and oversight practices

Risk Management

- Briefly describe how the organization manages financial and operational risk (e.g., contingency planning, reserves, cost controls)

Section II: Mission and Values Alignment

Required response elements:

- **Mission Alignment Statement**
 - Describe how your organization's mission aligns with MOED's goals for workforce development and economic mobility
- **Commitment to Equity**
 - Provide examples of how your organization actively supports individuals facing systemic barriers to employment
- **Values in Practice**
 - Describe how organizational values are operationalized in day-to-day decision-making, staffing, and leadership
- **Ethical Business Practices**
 - Include any commitments to ethical sourcing, sustainability, fair trade, or responsible procurement practices (if applicable)

Section III: Community Credibility & Representation

Required response elements:

- **Community Presence**
 - Describe your organization's presence in the local or regional community
 - Include partnerships with community-based organizations, workforce agencies, or local institutions
- **Lived Experience & Representation**
 - Describe how your leadership and/or staff reflect the communities served
 - Include any lived experience representation relevant to the target population
- **Partnership History**
 - Provide examples of past collaborations with public agencies, nonprofits, or workforce systems
- **Reputation**
 - Include references or testimonials that speak to credibility and impact

Section IV: Café Operations Capacity

Required response elements:

- **Staffing Plan**
 - Provide a detailed staffing plan for café operations, including:
 - All current and/or proposed positions (e.g., General Manager, Assistant Manager, Shift Leads, Baristas, Trainer, Inventory/Operations support, etc.)
 - A clear description of each role's responsibilities
 - Reporting structure or organizational chart (preferred)
 - Include brief bios or resumes of key current staff who would be assigned to this location, highlighting relevant café and/or workforce development experience
- **Operational Systems**
 - Describe systems used for:
 - Inventory management
 - Point of Sale (POS) operations
 - Scheduling and labor management
 - Financial tracking and reporting
- **Scale Capacity**
 - Provide evidence of current multi-unit café operations OR a clear and realistic plan for scaling to a multi-unit model
 - Describe how systems, staffing, and leadership structure support replication and consistency across locations
 - Include examples of past or current expansion, if applicable

Section V: Workforce Development Capacity

Required response elements:

- **Program Model**
 - Describe your workforce development or transitional employment model
 - Explain how participants are recruited, onboarded, trained, and supported
- **Supervision & Coaching**
 - Describe supervision structure for participants (who provides daily coaching and how)
 - Include approach to performance management, including supportive interventions and termination processes
- **Training & Skill Building**
 - Outline training curriculum components, including:
 - Customer service
 - Technical café skills
 - Workplace readiness skills
 - Certifications (if applicable)
- **Outcomes & Tracking**
 - Describe how you track participant outcomes (retention, placement, wage progression, etc.)
 - Include any data systems or evaluation tools used
- **Trauma-Informed Practice**
 - Describe approach to trauma-informed supervision and support for individuals with barriers to employment

Section VI: Brand, Marketing & Community Engagement

Required response elements:

- **Brand Strategy**
 - Describe your café brand identity and how it reflects mission and community values
- **Marketing Plan**
 - Provide a high-level marketing strategy for café operations, including:
 - Customer acquisition
 - Digital and social media strategy
 - Local outreach
- **Community Engagement Strategy**
 - Describe how the café will serve as a community hub or gathering space
 - Include plans for partnerships, events, or programming that drive engagement
- **Visibility & Storytelling**
 - Explain how you communicate impact (e.g., storytelling, impact reports, customer engagement, donor/community communication)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

APPLICATION COVER PAGE - 5 points

The application includes a cover page that follows the required template and provides all requested information.

ABSTRACT – 10 points

The abstract provides a comprehensive summary of the proposed initiative. The abstract includes descriptions of the population to be served and demonstrates an understanding of overall participant needs and demographics. Planned objectives and activities are clearly identified and described, and appear reasonable and achievable.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE – 60 points

Note: scores in some narrative sections should also take into account the formal Documentation of Organization's Qualifications provided as attachments to this application. The relevant document(s) are specified in each section. Qualification documents should be evaluated here as supporting evidence of statements within the narrative. A full compliance review of all documents will be conducted separately by the MOED Contracts Department.

Section I: Organizational Operation (10 points)

Relevant Qualification Document(s):

- Written personnel policies (table of contents required)
- Copy of Conflict of Interest Policy
- Written grievance procedure for customers/clients

- Description of ongoing quality assurance process for services
- Current annual budget document identifying all various funding sources and amounts.
- Revenue documentation identifying all various sources and amounts.

Organizational Capacity

The narrative clearly describes the organization's history and its number of years in operation. The organization has been successfully established as **both** a café operator and workforce development program for at least three years. Any major structural changes (mergers, leadership transitions, expansion, etc.) are noted. If they have occurred, the structural changes described contribute to the organization's stability and capacity.

Revenue Model

The organization's primary revenue streams are identified and the narrative clearly outlines how their existing café operation is financially sustained. Descriptions of funding streams sustaining workforce programming are also included, along with a clear and detailed explanation of how workforce development programming is integrated into the business model. The narrative demonstrates evidence of strong financial controls and oversight practices, and indicates the sustainability of the program model.

Risk Management

The organization describes comprehensive and effective policies to manage financial and operational risk (e.g., contingency planning, reserves, cost controls).

Section II: Mission and Values Alignment (10 points)

Relevant Qualification Document(s): N/A

Mission Alignment Statement

The proposal describes an organizational mission that aligns with MOED's goals for workforce development and economic mobility.

Commitment to Equity

The organization provides examples of how they actively support individuals facing systemic barriers to employment. The supports described align with the needs of the proposed population and offer effective solutions to common problems.

Values in Practice

Descriptions of day-to-day decision-making, staffing, and leadership clearly indicate that organizational values are integrated into program strategy and operations.

Ethical Business Practices

The proposal describes any commitments to ethical sourcing, sustainability, fair trade, or responsible procurement practices. These commitments are ***not required, but preferred***. Therefore, no points should be docked if these commitments are not in place; however, if they are, this should be noted in review comments.

Section III: Community Credibility & Representation (10 points)

Relevant Qualification Document(s): N/A

Community Presence

The proposal demonstrates that the organization has established trust, legitimacy, and meaningful presence in the community or communities they serve. The organization has a strong presence in the local or regional community, including partnerships with community-based organizations, workforce agencies, or local institutions.

Lived Experience & Representation

The proposal describes how the organization's leadership and/or staff reflect the communities served, and highlight any lived experience representation relevant to the target population. If organization leadership and staff do not possess relevant experience, the proposal discusses the organization's strategies for providing culturally competent services within their community.

Partnership History

The proposal demonstrates a history of successful past collaborations with public agencies, nonprofits, or workforce systems.

Reputation

The proposal includes references or testimonials that speak to credibility and impact.

Section IV: Café Operations Capacity (10 points)

Relevant Qualification Document(s):

- Current annual budget document identifying all various funding sources and amounts.
- Revenue documentation identifying all various sources and amounts.
- If the organization was audited within the past three years, a copy of the most recent formal audit completed within the last year. Must satisfactorily address all findings.
- If audited statement is unavailable, copies of unaudited financial statements for the three (3) most recently completed years.

Staffing Plan

The proposal includes a detailed staffing plan and/or organizational chart for café operations, including all current and/or proposed positions and clear description of each role's responsibilities. Brief bios/resumes for key current staff highlight relevant café and/or workforce development experience.

The staffing levels described are reasonable and adequate to support successful café operations independent of transitional employment staff.

Operational Systems

The proposal clearly designates and describes systems used for:

- Inventory management
- Point of Sale (POS) operations
- Scheduling and labor management
- Financial tracking and reporting

The systems described are reasonable and adequate to support successful café operations.

Scale Capacity

The organization demonstrates evidence of current multi-unit café operations OR a clear and realistic plan for scaling to a multi-unit model. Past or current expansions, if they have occurred, are specifically described. The systems, staffing, and leadership structure described support replication and consistency across locations.

Section V: Workforce Development Capacity (10 points)

Relevant Qualification Document(s):

- Adequate method to collect client information and demographics, such as a sample report
- Demonstrated ability to collect outcome data that measures performance to plan, such as a report showing actual to planned performance.

Program Model

The proposal clearly describes the organization's workforce development or transitional employment model and explains how participants are recruited, onboarded, trained, and supported.

Supervision & Coaching

The supervision structure for participants is outlined in detail, including which staff members are responsible for daily coaching. The structure of the daily coaching process is clearly defined and provides effective strategies for instruction and supportive interventions. The proposal also describes the organization's approach to performance management and termination. The processes outlined are structured, consisted, and culturally sensitive.

Training & Skill Building

The proposal identifies and describes all required training curriculum components, including customer service, technical café skills, workplace readiness skills, measurable skills gains, and certifications.

Outcomes & Tracking

The proposal identifies effective systems and evaluation tools for tracking participant outcomes, such as retention, placement, and wage progression.

Trauma-Informed Practice

The organization outlines an approach to trauma-informed supervision and support for individuals with barriers to employment that is relevant and effective within the target population.

Section VI: Brand, Marketing & Community Engagement

Relevant Qualification Documents: N/A

Brand Strategy

The organization describes its café brand identity and how it reflects mission and community values. The brand identity as described demonstrates the ability to build a café brand that attracts customers while advancing workforce development goals.

Marketing Plan

The proposal outlines a high-level marketing strategy for café operations, including customer acquisition, digital and social media strategy, and local outreach. The approach described is comprehensive and effective in reaching the café's target markets.

Community Engagement Strategy

The proposal articulates a clear vision for how the café will serve as a community hub or gathering space and includes plans for partnerships, events, or programming that drive engagement. The organization demonstrates willingness and capacity to collaborate with MOED in community outreach and engagement strategies.

Visibility & Storytelling

The proposal describes an effective strategy for communicating impact (e.g., storytelling, impact reports, customer engagement, donor/community communication). Note: Examples of reports or other public communications *may* be included as additional attachments to the proposal, but are not required.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT – 25 points

The organization has provided at least two letters of support from current or former stakeholders demonstrating their capacity to successfully conduct café operations and/or provide workforce development services, particularly to special populations experiencing barriers to employment.

Note: while it is not a requirement for each individual letter to address both café operations capacity and workforce development services, both issues must be addressed in this section. For example, if an

organization submits two letters, and one focuses solely on workforce development, the other *must* address the issue of café operations capacity.