**PUBLIC NOTICE**

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR WAGES PROGRAM

WAGES Program

NCBVIWAGES

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI) invites qualified and experienced organizations to submit proposals for the WAGES Program. This Request for Proposals (RFP) aims to identify a capable partner to collaborate with NCBVI in implementing and managing the WAGES Program.

ABOUT THE WAGES PROGRAM:

The WAGES (Work and Gain Experience in the Summer) program is part of NCBVI’s Transition Services unit and provides a six-week long summer program for youth 14-18 designed to empower them with practical work experience in career areas of their choice as well as learn advocacy and social skills by being exposed to blind role models. During the program, participants are provided with a solid base for vocational planning. Students also get a taste of what it is like to live away from home, as participants live in a dormitory setting on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s campus. WAGES partners with local employers to provide summer work opportunities for the students, providing valuable work skills. The youth work full-time jobs (30-40 hours a week) at a variety of locations, such as restaurants, childcare centers, libraries, hotels, museums, and government agencies. Students are expected to come to work on time, behave in a professional manner on the job site, and perform job duties as assigned. Students also participate in various seminars, which cover topics such as: Job readiness; Accessible technology; Blindness organizations; Food labs; and Blind entrepreneurship. During evenings and weekends, students participate in a variety of challenge activities, designed to expand their boundaries, and push them out of their comfort zones.

The WAGES program operates for six weeks (mid-June through mid-July) but will require contractor services each year from March 1st through August 15th in order to provide the necessary preparatory and concluding support services.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

The individual or organization possesses a diverse skill set and background, including consulting, marketing, and management expertise in government, non-profit, and for-profit sectors. They have experience in recruiting and managing a diverse workforce, with a commitment to inclusive hiring practices, particularly for individuals with disabilities. The passion for youth development, especially those with disabilities, is evident, demonstrated through involvement in after-school and summer programs. Community engagement is showcased by roles such as serving as Chair of the Board of Directors for a research institute. The individual's unique perspective, overcoming obstacles like being born blind, provides valuable insight into the needs of individuals with disabilities. Advocacy and commitment to child development programs, along with a strong dedication to equal opportunities for blind children, are highlighted. Collaborative skills are demonstrated through successful partnerships with various organizations nationally. Administrative and technical skills, including familiarity with blind and low vision technology, further complement their strong educational background. Overall, the individual exhibits a comprehensive skill set and a commitment to empowering and providing equal opportunities for youth, particularly those with disabilities.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

All proposals must be submitted by March 4, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. Late submissions will not be considered.

Detailed submission instructions, including the required format and documentation, can be found in the RFP document.

RFP DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:

The complete RFP document can be obtained from <https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/bidopps.html>. For inquiries or further information, please contact Tammie Dunn at Tammie.Dunn@nebraska.gov or (402) 314-2871.

NCBVI reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received and to negotiate separately with selected organizations. The selection of the successful proposal will be based on various factors, including but not limited to experience, qualifications, and proposed approach.

We look forward to receiving your proposals and appreciate your interest in partnering with NCBVI for the successful implementation of the WAGES Program.