

Questions & Answers for COL Youth AI Workforce Training Procurement released on 8.19.2026

Updated as of 9.22.26

- 1) Question: Could you route me to the authorized contact for confirming delivery and provider-eligibility requirements? If permitted, I can share a no-cost sample lesson outline; any onsite obligations would need to be agreed before a proposal.

Answer: Please see the eligibility requirements of program participants in the Scope of Work, Section C titled "Target Population and Eligibility", PDF Page 4.

- 2) Question: We would appreciate any available and permissible information related to the incumbent vendor for this or a similar prior engagement, specifically:
- Current or prior incumbent vendor(s) providing youth workforce training or AI workforce development services to the City of Lawrence and/or MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board
 - Contract term and expiration date of any active or recently expired agreement for these services
 - Historical contract value or annual spend associated with the current or prior engagement
 - Scope of services provided under any active or prior youth workforce training contract
 - Any publicly releasable award information, including prior solicitation numbers, award notices, or contract documents

Answer: Our most recent awardee was Lare for WIOA Youth Training. The COMMBUYS contract is noted so you may pull the RFP to determine the scope of work they based their proposal around.

I also wanted to provide the Cyber Warrior Foundation award information. They were awarded a WIOA Youth Training Services contract through the noted RFP. They agreed to do a Cyber Security training for the Youth – Closer to the industry of AI Training.

Though both were from our WIOA Youth Training Services procurement I hope this information was applicable for your request. Following the design and requests within this current RFP for Youth AI Workforce Training will be useful in delivering an advantageous proposal. Direct historical data from past solicitations would not align well with the current requests.

COMMBUYS Contract #	Awardee	Composite Score Total
BD-24-1412-LAW26-LAW85-100510	Cyber Warrior Foundation	74.32
BD-26-1412-LAW26-LAW85-126292	Lare Institute / American Training Inc.	80.87

Awardee	Amount of Award	Start Date	End Date
Cyber Warrior Foundation	\$129,485.40	8/5/2024	6/30/2025
Lare Institute / American Training Inc.	\$61,950.48	8/21/2026	6/25/2027

*Funding Letters included in this response are available upon request

3) Question: Please clarify how to fill in the Project Performance Goals section of the proposal.

Answer: Please reference page 13 of the RFP for a description of the measurable outcomes and MMVWB Program Performance Goals (Based on FY26 WIOA Performance Measures). This will give background to what our goals are for the program.

Please also see page 4 Section II. General Conditions & Terms for information on the length of contract and other information that may provide better background on the RFP.

4) Question: Could you please confirm whether advance registration is required for the September 8 bidder conference, and whether all addenda and formal Q&A responses will be posted through MassHire Merrimack Valley website, COMMBUYS, or both?

Answer: No advanced registration is needed, anyone interested in the RFP may join the bidder's conference Zoom meeting. The link is in the RFP. Questions and Answers will be posted on the MassHire website and we are not planning to post these updates on COMMBUYS as the RFP indicates where to find the materials and when they would be available.

5) Question: We are also evaluating a collaborative response structure and would appreciate confirmation of the proper procedure and deadline for submitting any qualification or teaming-related questions. Please clarify how to fill in the Project Performance Goals section of the proposal

Answer: The proposal should address how the suggested program would operate. Filling out a proposal while addressing all requests in the RFP should align the proposal with the RFP requirements. It is recommended to include all relevant certifications available with the proposal. Follow-up information may be requested as seen in attachment R of the RFP for awarded proposers.

6) Question: I recognize that the full RFP requires recruitment, case management, credentials, employer partnerships and placement services. I would welcome introductions to organizations seeking a distinctive human-AI curriculum partner.

Answer: Because the procurement process is currently open, we must remain neutral and ensure that all potential applicants have equal access to information and opportunity. For that reason, we are not able to recommend or facilitate partnerships between specific proposers. However, you are certainly welcome to share your interest and capabilities with organizations that may be considering submitting a proposal, and any qualified organization may independently determine whether your expertise would strengthen its proposed team.

7) Question: Does MMVWB allow a 100% Live instructor-led online training program delivered via Zoom?

Answer: Yes. A 100% live, instructor-led online training model may be proposed, provided the program meets the requirements, objectives, and participant support expectations outlined in the RFP. Proposers should clearly describe their online instructional model, student engagement methods, technology requirements, attendance procedures, and any supports provided to participants who may experience barriers to online participation.

8) Question: Is a physical classroom or office location in Lawrence required for eligibility?

Answer: No. A physical classroom or office location in Lawrence is not required for eligibility. However, because the program is intended to serve eligible Lawrence residents, proposers should demonstrate their ability to effectively recruit, enroll, serve, and support participants in the City of Lawrence.

9) Question: Are internships mandatory post training?

Answer: No. Internships are not mandatory unless otherwise specified in the RFP. However, proposers are encouraged to include internships, work-based learning, employer engagement, project-based learning, or other experiential opportunities that strengthen participants' connection to AI-related careers.

10) Question: Is the provider required to place participants into employment, or is placement assistance sufficient?

Answer: The provider is expected to provide meaningful employment and career placement assistance. Proposers should clearly describe their approach to connecting participants with employment opportunities, employers, career pathways, internships, and/or further education and training. While actual employment outcomes are an important measure of program success, the proposal should distinguish between employment placement and placement assistance and clearly state the provider's commitments and anticipated outcomes.

11) Question: Is a partnership with a Lawrence-based organization required, or optional?

Answer: A formal partnership with a Lawrence-based organization is not required. However, partnerships with Lawrence-based employers, educational institutions, community organizations, workforce partners, or other relevant organizations are encouraged and may strengthen a proposal by demonstrating local connections, outreach capacity, participant support, and access to employment opportunities. Partnerships with employers is the only requirement in regards to partnerships following RFP guidelines.

12) Question: Are the \$15.00 per hour stipend payments on top of the \$350 incentive payments?

Answer: Yes, that is on top of the \$350 incentive payments. Both incentive and stipend costs should be included in the budget.

The RFP now has an addendum addressing stipends:

The MMVWB will provide stipend payments to youth participants at a rate of \$25.00 per day for in-person or virtual training and program activities. These stipends will be paid by the MMVWB/City of Lawrence, and the prospective bidder should include these costs in their budget.

13) Question: Are stipends and incentives paid from the \$100,000 award or paid separately by MMVWB with bidders budgeting them for planning purposes only?

Answer: This would be budgeted within the \$100,000. It is a component of your budget.

14) Question: Is the twelve months of follow-up funded with this contract and does the contract period extend to cover it?

Answer: No, the twelve month follow-up services are not funded and the contract will not be extended.

15) Question: Is there an expected enrollment size, or is that at bidder discretion?

Answer: Enrollment size is at your discretion. We're asking how you best think you can serve your enrollees.

16) Question: Who retains ownership of pre-existing curriculum frameworks and tools incorporated into the project, and what usage rights would the City require?

Answer: Please see attachment T in the RFP, point 37 titled "INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, OWNERSHIP OF MATERIALS" on PDF page 48.

17) Question: Must one prime contractor cover all 14 service areas, or may a collaborative proposal divide them among named partners, including a specialized subcontractor responsible specifically for AI curriculum and training?

Answer: Collaborative proposals are encouraged. Whoever is applying for the RFP would be our main contact and would be responsible for making sure all points in the RFP are covered in your proposal. You are welcome to partner and subcontract with other partners whether it would be for the training itself or case management or anything like that.

18) Question: Can the program be delivered remotely or is physical presence required?

Answer: A proposal can suggest either setting for the program.

19) Question: May an out-of-state training provider propose a hybrid delivery model in which AI instruction and workforce-readiness training are delivered virtually, while a Massachusetts-based partner or subcontractor provides local recruitment, case management, work-based learning, employer engagement and participant support?

Answer: Yes, that would be considered a collaborative proposal.

20) Question: You have a list of credentials in the RFP that are driven by existing curricula offered by major technology companies to develop basic AI skills. How should that be interpreted? Is it your preference that one of these existing curriculum packages be deployed or that something bespoke to a different organization not on the list be offered.

Answer: Industry-recognized credentials are the goal. The purpose of the program is to have participants gain certifications as one of the tiers and it was a highlight of industry-recognized credentials. If there are others that would best fit that area and that your organization can say that this credential is also industry-recognized, I think that would be great to include. I think it would be an adequate placement. Other credentials that are seen as recognized in the industry would be applicable as well.

21) Question: Please Clarify whether or not if for example we choose to use Google certifications, all that needs to be paid for and that's something that needs to be clarified whether or not you are including it in the RFP amount vs other things.

Answer: Any costs incurred in your training must be within the budgeted amount.

22) Question: Much of this proposal although titled AI training is relatively standard Workforce Development execution of the 14 WIOA elements across standard service verticals. Do you have an existing per participant cost that you would associate with the delivery of standard WIOA programming for Merrimack Valley just as a benchmark for understanding the general overhead associated with delivering the WIOA services for your region?

Answer: With our standard WIOA programming, a general benchmark would be \$7,500 for training and \$3,125 for stipends. This would be a total cost of \$10,625 per participant.

23) Question: Will we have access to all questions asked on today's call?

Answer: Today's questions and answers and questions received prior to today will be posted on the MMVWB website by the end of this week.

24) Question: Will we have access to all questions asked on today's call?

Answer: A responding proposer would need to have the capabilities to address the entire scope of work. Partnerships are allowed, all information regarding work distribution and organization information of all parties would need to be included in the proposal. A combination of remote and on-site services is allowed.

25) Question: For the 15-point Organizational Capacity and Experience section, may a proposer demonstrate relevant past performance through comparable education, workforce, technology/AI, or youth programs delivered internationally and/or through the documented prior experience of key personnel assigned to the project?

Answer: Proposers may demonstrate relevant organizational experience through comparable education, workforce development, technology/AI, or youth programs delivered in the United States or internationally, provided that the experience is relevant to the services proposed under this RFP and is clearly documented.

Proposers may also describe the relevant prior experience and qualifications of key personnel assigned to the project. However, the experience of individual key personnel should supplement, rather than replace, the proposer's description of its organizational capacity and experience. Proposers should clearly identify the individual, their role on the proposed project, the applicable prior project or program, and how that experience is relevant to the proposed services.

26) Question: Additionally, must a proposer provide data for every Vendor Past Performance metric listed in Attachment D, or may the proposer provide all applicable/available metrics and identify metrics that were not tracked or were not applicable to the comparable program?

Answer: For Vendor Past Performance, proposers should provide all applicable and available information for the metrics identified in Attachment D. If a particular metric was not tracked, is not available, or is not applicable to the comparable program, the proposer may identify the metric as "Not Tracked," "Not Available," or "Not Applicable," as appropriate, and should provide a brief explanation.

Proposers should not estimate, calculate, or otherwise create performance data that was not actually collected. Where comparable data are available under a different methodology or definition, proposers should identify the methodology used and provide a brief explanation so that the review committee can appropriately interpret the information.

The absence of a particular metric from a prior program will not, by itself, make a proposal non-responsive; however, the review committee may consider the completeness, relevance, and verifiability of the information provided when evaluating Organizational Capacity and Experience.

27) Question: Bidder is an Ohio for-profit LLC. We would be the prime applicant, delivering AI instruction live online, with a Lawrence-based community organization as subcontractor for recruitment and case management. Please confirm an out-of-state, for-profit LLC is eligible to be the prime.

Answer: The RFP does not make any exclusions for a Qualified Bidder's address:

I. Background Information & Purpose

The MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board (MMVWB) is soliciting proposals from qualified organizations, educational institutions, employers, and collaborative partnerships to design and implement innovative Artificial Intelligence (AI) workforce development programs that prepare residents for employment in emerging AI-related occupations and support employers in adopting AI technologies.

28) Question: Attachment P requires a Certificate of Good Standing from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. We have no Massachusetts tax filing obligations today. If DOR will not issue a certificate to an entity with no Massachusetts tax account, will MMVWB accept an Ohio Secretary of State Certificate of Good Standing plus a written explanation, or allow the DOR certificate before contract execution?

Answer: Please provide a Certificate of Good Standing from the State where you operate and have tax filing obligations.

29) Question: Attachment N assumes audited financial statements or a Single Audit. For a small LLC below audit thresholds, what should be submitted instead?

Answer: Please provide the last two (2) years of your annual tax filings.

30) Question: Attachment Q has no line for subcontracts. Where should a subcontract with a community partner be entered?

Answer: Please list subcontractors in C. Non-Personnel; Other Costs (please identify).

31) Question: Would Google AI Essentials and Microsoft Azure AI Fundamentals each meet the credential attainment measure?

Answer: These two trainings would be considered industry recognized credential should students pass the course and attain the credential/certificate associated with each of the trainings.

32) Question: Please clarify whether the RFP permits a prime bidder to use subcontractors or teaming partners for discrete curriculum/training components;

Answer: Yes, a prime bidder can use subcontractors or teaming partners for discrete curriculum/training components.

33) Question: Please clarify whether an out-of-state specialist subcontractor may deliver its portion fully virtually/remotely.

Answer: Yes, an out of state specialist subcontractor may deliver its portion fully virtual/remotely.

34) Question: Please clarify whether such a specialist would need to satisfy any separate vendor-registration, certification, insurance, or other eligibility requirements beyond those flowed down by the prime.

Answer: The out of state specialist subcontract will not need separate vendor-registration, certification, insurance ,or other eligibility requirements beyond those flowed down by the prime.

35) Question: Certificate of Good Standing / out-of-state LLC Bidder is a Maryland limited liability company and is currently in good standing in Maryland. Our proposed program model can be delivered primarily through live instructor-led virtual training to eligible Lawrence residents, with employer-facing work-based learning and placement activities coordinated for the Lawrence/Merrimack Valley market.

Attachment J addresses non-corporate providers, while Attachment P instructs bidders to obtain a current Certificate of Good Standing through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts / Department of Revenue. For an out-of-state LLC at the proposal stage, should we submit our current Maryland Certificate of Status/Good Standing, or is Massachusetts foreign registration and/or a Massachusetts DOR Certificate of Good Standing required before the October 1 proposal deadline? If a Massachusetts certificate is required, please identify the specific document the Board expects.

Answer: Please provide a Certificate of Good Standing from the State where you operate and have tax filing obligations.

36) Question: Attachment N — Audit Certification Bidder is a privately held for-profit small business that is not subject to a Single Audit requirement and does not currently have audited financial statements. Attachment N presents three certification choices, none of which appears to describe that circumstance. What should an organization in this category submit for

Attachment N so the proposal is considered responsive?

Answer: Please provide the last two (2) years of your annual tax filings.

37) Question: Price Proposal attachment packaging

The submission instructions on page 9 direct bidders to email two files, with the second named "AI Training RFP Price Proposal 10.1.2026 – Attachments F thru O." The Minimum Qualifying Criteria on page 11 also require Attachment P (Certificate of Good Standing) and Attachment Q (completed Budget & Budget Narrative). Should Attachments P and Q be included in the same Price Proposal file despite the "F thru O" filename, or submitted separately?

Answer: Please include Attachment P (Certificate of Good Standing) and Attachment Q (completed Budget & Budget Narrative) with the Price Proposal.

38) Question: May a proposer budget for a workforce-services subcontractor to be selected after award, subject to MMVWB's written approval and before participant services begin? Or must that organization be identified at submission?

Answer: Budgeted subcontractors must be identified at the time of bid submission.

39) Question: For a small business without audited financial statements or a Single Audit, what documentation, if any, is acceptable for Attachment N?

Answer: Please provide the last two (2) years of your annual tax filings.

40) Question: Must employer commitment letters accompany the proposal, or may those commitments be finalized during contract negotiation?

Answer: Please see the last page of Attachment D for information about employer commitment letter requirements. These should be included in your overall submission on October 1st, 2026 as this is how reviewers will "grade" proposals.

41) Question: Clarify whether a qualified prime or collaborative applicant may use an out-of-state specialist subcontractor or curriculum contributor for a defined portion of the AI instruction? If so, may that specialist component be delivered fully virtually while the prime retains responsibility for local recruitment, participant services, credentials, employer engagement, reporting, and other program administration?

Answer: Yes, an out of state specialist subcontractor may be used to deliver the instruction component virtually.

42) Question: **Lead applicant capability.** Attachment T section 32 requires the Board's written consent before a subcontract is placed, and the RFP strongly encourages collaborative proposals with community-based organizations. Will the Board consider a proposal in which the lead applicant supplies the artificial intelligence training model, curriculum, credential alignment and instructor preparation, while a Lawrence-based community-based organization partner carries recruitment, enrollment, case management, work experience placement and the twelve months of follow-up services? Put another way, must the lead applicant hold the case management and placement capability directly, or may that capability sit with the named partner?

Answer: Yes, the lead applicant can provide the training, and the subcontractor can provide recruitment, enrollment, case management, work experience placement and the twelve months of follow-up services.

43) Question: **Budget basis.** Attachment Q requires stipend costs at \$15.00 per hour to be included in the bidder's budget. What cohort size, and what number of stipend-eligible classroom and program hours per participant, should bidders budget against so that proposals are comparable to each other? If the Board does not prescribe these, would you confirm that bidders may state their own assumptions in the budget narrative?

Answer: The RFP now has an addendum addressing stipends:

The MMVWB will provide stipend payments to youth participants at a rate of \$25.00 per day for in-person or virtual training and program activities. These stipends will be paid by the MMVWB/City of Lawrence, and the prospective bidder should include these costs in their budget.

The MMVWB does not prescribe cohort size or classroom and program hours.

44) Question: **Award structure.** The RFP anticipates one or more contracts totaling up to \$100,000. Will the Board consider separate awards for distinct components, for example one award for program delivery and case management and a separate award for the artificial intelligence training model, curriculum and instructor preparation? If so, is there a maximum per award?

Answer: The MMVWB will not consider separate awards for the artificial intelligence training model, curriculum and instructor preparation.

45) Question: For a non-Massachusetts LLC, should we complete Attachment I, Signatory Authorization for Corporate Providers, or Attachment J, Signatory Authorization for Non-Corporate Providers?

Answer: Please complete Attachment I, Signatory Authorization for Corporate Providers.

46) Question: Attachment P directs proposers to obtain a Certificate of Good Standing from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Revenue. For an out-of-state LLC, is a current Certificate of Good Standing from our home state acceptable at proposal submission, or must the proposer register in Massachusetts and obtain a Massachusetts certificate before submitting the proposal? If Massachusetts registration is required, may that documentation instead be provided upon award?

Answer: Please provide a Certificate of Good Standing from the State where you operate and have tax filing obligations.

47) Question: For Attachment N, how should a privately held LLC that is not subject to a Single Audit and does not have audited financial statements complete the Audit Certification? Is an unaudited financial statement acceptable, or should the proposer indicate that an audit is not applicable?

Answer: Please provide the last two (2) years of your annual tax filings.

48) Question: For a collaborative proposal in which the prime provides AI curriculum, instruction, workforce readiness and program management while a Massachusetts-based partner supports local recruitment, case management, employer engagement and work-based learning, are signed letters of commitment or MOUs from proposed partners required with the October 1 proposal, or is identification of the partners, their roles and work distribution sufficient at proposal submission?

Answer: The RFP does not prohibit training vendors from other states from applying. Strong collaborations/partnerships to ensure all program aspects are being met is encouraged through the RFP. Please see the last page of Attachment D for information about employer commitment letter requirements. These should be included in your overall submission on October 1st, 2026 as this is how reviewers will “grade” proposals.