

DECEMBER 6, 2021



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
**LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

AN ANALYSIS OF MICHIGAN'S DEPLOYMENT OF TANF
DOLLARS AND BARRIERS TO ACCESS OF BENEFITS

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:

12:00PM (NOON) ON JANUARY 21, 2022

CONTACT:

Amaya Durkee, Senior Executive Management Assistant
Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
616-522-7772

LEO-PovertyTaskForce@michigan.gov

SECTION I OVERVIEW

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) from interested parties to conduct a comprehensive study and evaluation of the following:

1. The effectiveness of the state's use of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding; and
2. Barriers to state assistance programs, including application processes and waiting periods.

The external evaluator (Evaluator) will conduct an evaluation and support efforts to assess outcomes and suggest program improvements. The Evaluator will be required to meet the defined Project Management constraints (time, cost, deliverable expectations). Therefore, she/he/they must have knowledge of evaluation methods, including data collection and analysis, and the expertise to provide the evaluation.

BACKGROUND

In February 2021, the Michigan Poverty Task Force released a report detailing 35 recommendations that would help to improve the lives of those in the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population and other low-income Michiganders. These recommendations focus on what state government can, and should, do to help eradicate poverty.

Included in the report were recommendations centered around the state's use of TANF funding, including conducting an in-depth study of the effectiveness of TANF distribution. As of 2017, only 19% of available TANF dollars were used for basic assistance, child care and resources to help poor Michiganders connect to and retain jobs. This compares with a national average of 52% of TANF dollars being used for core purposes by state governments.

Recommendations were also made to simplify application eligibility periods, automate the processing of Medicaid/Medicare benefits for returning citizens, end lifetime bans for work requirement violations, and end asset tests for food assistance, all with the goal of identifying and eliminating economic and social barriers to state assistance programs.

PURPOSE

Through this grant, LEO will provide funding for a comprehensive study to determine if the state's current approach to TANF distribution is serving low-income families well, along with analyzing other state public assistance benefit programs to identify potential barriers to access and provide suggestions on removing any such barriers. The study should include analysis of: access to TANF and other public assistance benefit program dollars for low-income families, potential barriers to the program, the effects of asset tests, sanctions imposed on families, dollars used for administrative purposes, inequities in TANF and other state public assistance benefit program distribution that result in racial disparities, spending on programs beyond the

core areas of TANF, benefit levels, time limits, and any other factors affecting TANF and other state public assistance program efficacy.

The goal is to determine if there are better ways to allocate TANF funding and remove barriers to access for other state public assistance benefit programs to support low-income families and those in the ALICE population, to enable these families to meet their basic needs, support economic mobility, and reduce the impact of poverty on families with children.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Utilizing no more than 10% of the award for administrative costs, LEO seeks to secure a qualified entity to provide, including but not limited to, the following:

1. Participate in all relevant meetings with the program team to support the review and evaluation.
2. Review material and utilize all existing documentation to evaluate TANF funding and barriers to accessing other public assistance benefit programs in the state of Michigan, which may include developing and delivering surveys and use of focus groups to elicit insight and perspective from residents who have lived experience accessing TANF funded resources. Respondent should provide an overview of the process to be used to identify stakeholders and those with lived experience, to gather this information. LEO and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will provide final approval on surveys and questions utilized.
3. Provide an evaluation plan including research questions, evaluation methods, and data needed as part of the project. The evaluation plan should include a project timeline outlining proposed deliverables, tasks, and timeframes. The evaluation plan shall be approved by the MDHHS and LEO prior to the commencement of the research. The entity shall work with staff from LEO and MDHHS to further define the specific research questions and add more substance in order to build upon the existing data and research projects already underway at LEO and MDHHS.
4. Develop a final evaluation report that includes an executive summary, findings, recommendations, and lessons learned. An interim report shall be made available and included in the project timeline, prior to the development of the final evaluation report.
5. Schedule and conduct any necessary meetings with program partners.
6. Keep, track, and report progress monthly.
7. Present findings to stakeholder groups during a 2–4-week time period after the final report is released.
8. Respond to LEO and MDHHS staff communications regarding the project within two (2) business days.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

To ensure quality execution of this grant, the Evaluator is responsible for participating in scheduled check-in calls and submitting Monthly Narrative Progress Reports and Monthly Financial Reports to LEO. Report templates will be provided.

SECTION II PROPOSAL FORMAT

REQUIRED PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

Respondents are encouraged to be innovative in their proposed design and delivery of this grant. The following proposal components outline the requirement for this RFP:

- Business Organization and History
- Scope of Services
- Competence, Experience, and Staff Capacity
- Budget/Budget Narrative

Business Organization and History

State the full name, address, phone number, and contact person for Respondent organization and, if applicable, the branch office or other subordinate element that will perform, or assist in performing, the work. Indicate whether it operates as an individual, partnership, or corporation; if as a corporation, include the state in which it is incorporated. If appropriate, the proposal must state whether the organization is licensed to operate in the State of Michigan.

Scope of Services

Please provide a narrative description of the Respondent organization's ability, capacity and plan to deliver the *Scope of Services* in each area described in Section I above. The narrative description should include information regarding the Respondent organization's evaluation plan such as research questions, evaluation methods, and intended data sources.

Competence, Experience, and Staff Capacity

Describe the prior experience of the Respondent organization that may be considered relevant to the successful accomplishment of the scope of services defined in this RFP. Include sufficient detail to demonstrate the relevance of such experience. In this section, proposals submitted should include descriptions of qualifying experience and information on two (2) prior evaluation projects of federal, state, or local programs the Respondent has completed including project description, grant amounts, start and completion dates, and types of evaluation services provided (including information on qualitative and quantitative methods used).

Respondent should also include one sample pre-award proposal evaluation plan and one sample post-award work, i.e., a completed, final report produced for a prior program evaluation project, with proprietary information redacted.

The Respondent must be able to staff a project team that possesses talent and expertise in the field of the requirements of this RFP. Identify staff leads assigned by name and title. Include experience and any other appropriate information regarding the work team's qualification to implement the scope of services. Show where the project team will be physically located during the time they are engaged in the work. Indicate which of these individuals is considered key to the successful completion of the work. Do not include any financials for the contemplated work within the Proposal. Resumes of qualifications should be supplied for proposed project personnel.

Include the name and telephone number of person(s) in the Respondent organization authorized to expedite any proposed grant with LEO.

Respondent should provide at least three (3) references for work conducted as an evaluator.

Include any other information that is believed to be pertinent, but not specifically asked for elsewhere.

BUDGET/BUDGET NARRATIVE

A comprehensive budget covering the grant period is required. Please complete the appropriate section of Attachment A: Proposal Template, which includes components such as personnel, fringe benefits, indirect costs, travel, supplies and materials, contractual services and other. The Budget Narrative must thoroughly describe how the planned expenses and requested funding support the scope of services.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

The proposal narrative is limited to eight (8) pages, single spaced, single side 8.5 x 11 page with 12-point Arial font, using one-inch margins. Attachments, such as resumes, prior work examples, etc. are not included in the eight-page limit.

**SECTION III
RFP PROCESS AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

TIMELINE FOR GRANT PROPOSAL AND AWARD

Proposals must be submitted to the contact person listed below via email by 12:00 PM (NOON) on January 21, 2022.

Contact: Amaya Durkee, Senior Executive Management Assistant
Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
616-522-7772
LEO-PovertyTaskForce@michigan.gov

All respondents will be contacted regarding their status and/or potential grant award per the following schedule:

DATE	ACTIVITY
December 6, 2021	RFP Posted
December 9, 2021	Pre-Bid Webinar
January 21, 2022	Deadline for Submission
February 11, 2022	Awardees Notified
February 14, 2022 – December 16, 2022	Grant Period

PRE-BID WEBINAR/QUESTIONS

A pre-bid webinar will be held on Thursday, December 9, 2021, from 1 pm – 2 pm. Interested parties can register at https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_hWqH4DLgTqas-QjMpch8dw. Questions can be submitted prior to the webinar to LEO-PovertyTaskForce@michigan.gov.

ELIGIBLE RFP RESPONDENTS

Examples of eligible Respondents include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Entities
- Research Entities/Think Tanks
- Foundations
- Economic Development Organizations
- Business and Industry Associations
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Community-Based Organizations

PROPOSALS

To be considered, Respondents must submit a complete response to this RFP by noon on Friday, January 21, 2022. No other distribution of proposals is to be made by the Respondent. Respondent's proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. There should be no attachments, enclosures, or exhibits other than those required in the RFP or considered by the Respondent to be essential to a complete understanding of the proposal. Each section of the proposal should be clearly identified with appropriate headings.

The Technical Proposal must be **signed physically or electronically** by an official of the Respondent authorized to bind the Respondent to its provisions. The proposal must include a statement as to the period during which it remains valid; this period must be at least ninety (90) days from Friday, January 21, 2022. The rates quoted in the budget must remain firm for the period indicated in Section II.

Each proposal should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Respondent's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Respondents will be rated on evidence of the capacity, commitment, and experience to carry out program management responsibilities; the ability to provide match and/or in-kind support; the experience of the selected Organization; and a plan for decision-making and internal communications.

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated based upon a three-step selection process. The proposal must address the requirements described in Section II of this RFP.

The first step is an evaluation of which proposals satisfactorily meet the requirements of this RFP.

Step I – Evaluation for Compliance

- a) *Proposal Content* – Proposals will be screened for technical compliance to include but not limited to:
- Timely submission of the proposal.
 - Proposal, Budget, and Budget Narrative clearly identified.
 - Proposal signed physically or electronically by an official of the Respondent authorized to bind the Respondent to its provisions.
 - Proposals satisfy the form and content requirements of this RFP.

Step II – Criteria for Satisfactory Proposals

- a) During the second step of the selection process, proposals will be considered by a Joint Evaluation Committee ("JEC") comprised of individuals selected by LEO. Only those proposals that satisfy the requirements described in this RFP, as determined by the JEC, will be considered for evaluation in Step II. The JEC reserves the right to request additional information from any Respondent.

- b) *Competence, Experience and Staffing Capacity* – The proposal should indicate the ability of the Respondent to meet the requirements of this RFP, especially the quality, and recent projects similar to that described in this RFP. The proposal should indicate the competence of the personnel whom the Respondent intends to assign to the project, including education and experience, with particular reference to experience on projects similar to that described in this RFP.
- c) *Delivery of Scope of Services* – The proposal should indicate the ability of the Respondent to execute the Scope of Services as described in Section I above.
- d) During the JEC’s review, Respondents may be required to make oral presentations of their proposals to the JEC. These presentations provide an opportunity for the Respondents to clarify the proposals. LEO will schedule these presentations, if required by the JEC.

Step III – Criteria for Satisfactory Budget/Budget Narrative

- a) Based on what is in the best interest of the State of Michigan, LEO will award the Grant considering value, quality, and the ability to meet the objectives of this RFP, of proposals that were approved as a result of this three-step evaluation process.
- b) LEO reserves the right to consider economic impact on the State when evaluating proposal budgets. This includes, but is not limited to, job creation, job retention, tax revenue implications, and other economic considerations.
- c) The award recommendation will be made to the responsive and responsible Respondents who offer the best value to LEO and the State of Michigan. The Respondents offering the best proposal that meets the objectives of the RFP will determine best value.
- d) LEO reserves the right to award to another “best value” Respondent in case the original Respondent does not accept the award, or to multiple Respondents.

Scoring Criteria for Proposals

	EXEMPLARY	ADEQUATE	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	MISSING INFORMATION	SCORE
Proposal Compliance (Up To 15 Points)					
Proposal Narrative (Up To 50 Points)					
Budget/Budget Narrative (Up To 40 Points)					
Totals					

**ATTACHMENT A
PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

Deadline for Submissions: 12:00 PM (NOON) on January 21, 2022

BUSINESS ORGANIZATION AND HISTORY:

Respondent Type: [Select Respondent Type](#)

Organization Name: [Click here to enter Organization Name](#)

Contact Name: [Click here to enter Contact Name](#)

Title: [Click here to enter Title](#)

Address: [Click here to enter Street Address](#)
[Click here to enter City, State, and Zip Code](#)

Phone: [Click here to enter Phone Number](#)

Email: [Click here to enter Email Address](#)

Website: [Click here to enter Website](#)

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE: **Scope of Services**

Please provide a narrative description of the Respondent organization's ability, capacity and plan to deliver the *Scope of Services* in each area as described in Section I above.

Click here to enter **Scope of Services**

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE: Competence, Experience and Staffing Capacity

Please provide a narrative description of the Respondent organization's *Competence, Experience and Staffing Capacity*, as described in Section II.

Click here to enter **Competence, Experience and Staffing Capacity**

BUDGET/BUDGET NARRATIVE

Please provide a budget and budget narrative to cover the costs to deliver the services stated in the proposal for a period covering February 14, 2022 through December 16, 2022:

	Grant Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Totals
Salaries/Personnel				
Fringe Benefits				
Travel				
Materials and Supplies				
Contractual Services				
Other				
Totals				

Please include below narrative descriptions for all items included in the budget above:

Salaries/Personnel

**Please include time commitments for personnel in terms of full-time equivalents, half time equivalents, quarter time equivalents, etc.*

Click here to enter **Salaries/Personnel**

Fringe Benefits

**Calculate percentage of Salaries above*

Click here to enter **Fringe Benefits**

Travel

Click here to enter **Travel**

Materials and Supplies

Click here to enter **Materials and Supplies**

Contractual Services

Click here to enter **Contractual Services**

Other

Click here to enter **Other**