

AEBG Year 1 - Request for Proposal

Are you an existing 2015-2016 AEBG funding participant?

No

Program Name

Workforce System Navigator for Older Adults and Long-Term Unemployed

Primary Contact Name

Patrick Boxall

Primary Contact Email

pboxall@kra.com

Primary Contact Phone

301-562-2346

Applicable Program Area

Adults in the Workforce

1. Executive Summary

With over three decades of experience and knowledge, KRA provides a full portfolio of services related to workforce and economic development programs. KRA is recognized as a national leader in workforce development for its program innovations, exceptional customer service, and trusted operational results. KRA's guiding principles of Knowledge, Responsibility, and Achievement support its' mission – to provide businesses with a trained and reliable workforce by preparing jobseekers for today's competitive workplace environment, and tomorrow's global economy.

On behalf of the Santa Barbara Workforce Development Board (WDB) and the County of Santa Barbara, KRA is the One Stop Operator and the Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Operator for the Workforce Resource Centers in the County. In addition, we are responsible for fulfilling the purpose and intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and helping businesses, individuals, and industries achieve and sustain economic vitality across all communities in Santa Barbara County.

The WDB receives limited funding from the US DOL, and therefore prioritizes services available -and takes participants on a come first basis. Under the current competitive job market, older adults and those who have been out of the workforce for extended period are often the last to be served--or not at all. This proposal requests funding to support one part-time Workforce Resource Center staff to serve as a "navigator" and one part-time Business Services Consultant to perform job development activities for these two groups in South County.

The overarching goals of this program will be:

1. Improved labor market engagement of older adults and long-term unemployed to make recommendations to improve their opportunities.
2. Employer outreach and education.
3. Outreach and better delivery of existing services to older workers and long-term unemployed
4. Tailoring one-stop programs to better meet the specific needs of older workers and long-term unemployed.

2. Integration

The Navigator will work in partnership with the AEBG Consortium and the WDB to engage CBC and other entities serving the older population and/or long-term unemployed. The Navigator will serve as an active case manager and be available to answer questions from these populations about the workforce system, explain where and how the One-Stops operate, and help these two groups stay connected to the workforce system, community colleges, and employers. The Navigator will assist with the first appointment by the participant at the One-Stop. The Navigator will also interact with other One Stop staff to assist, as necessary, in serving the participant. We will also explore how to customize workshops to better address the barriers to employment faced by older workers and long-term unemployed that may prevent them from transitioning to educational programs and/or the workforce. Workshops may include: financial literacy, mental health, professional branding, and others.

3. Justification

Considerable evidence shows that older workers who lose a job have a more difficult time than their younger counterparts in reconnecting to the labor market. According to the January 2016 Worker Displacement Report released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the reemployment rate was 73 percent for workers ages 25 to 54, up from 68 percent for the prior survey. Reemployment rates were lower for older workers. In January 2016, the rates for those ages 55 to 64 and 65 years and over were 60 percent and 27 percent, respectively. Among those aged 65 and over, 63 percent were no longer in the labor force when surveyed.

In one study, only half of older workers who lost their jobs and sought to return to work were able to find a new job (Maestas, N., & Li, X. (2006). Discouraged workers? Job search outcomes of older workers [Abstract]. University of Michigan, Michigan Retirement Research Center). Another study by The Urban Institute in 2011, found that older workers (ages 50 to 61) who lost their jobs between mid-2008 and 2009 were a third less likely to find work within 12 months when compared with those ages 25 to 34, and those 62 or older were half as likely to find work within 12 months. These studies directly correlate to the BLS data above. The data also indicates that once they lose a job, older workers face a longer stretch of unemployment on average than younger workers. In March 2012, the average period of unemployment for older job seekers (55 and up) was 55.7 weeks, compared to 37.3 weeks for younger job seekers (Rix, S. (2012). The employment situation, March 2012: Unemployment rises for older workers. Washington, D.C.: AARP Public Policy Institute). Not surprisingly given the duration of unemployment, a larger share of reemployed older job losers compared to younger, prime-age job losers exhaust their Unemployment Insurance before finding another job (Levine, L. (2010). Older displaced workers in the context of an aging and slowly growing population. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service).

Additionally, older workers and the long-term unemployed may also have a reluctance or are unaware of the services provided through local workforce system. Consequently, a connection to the Workforce Resource centers can positively impact their ability to transition to credit/transfer educational programs or to the workforce. The workforce system can help these populations strengthen their job search skills and increase an individuals' ability to market their strengths – especially with the advent of the Internet and social networking as job-hunting tools.

The WDB funded Workforce and Industry Sector research also shows a crisis situation in helping the majority of Santa Barbara County residents to obtain "middle-wage" or "Tier 2" jobs. These are the jobs that pay livable wages in the community. In addition, the State Labor Market Information Division's annual Job Projections for Santa Barbara County also support the fact that middle wage jobs are below the State Average, by from 3% to 5%. According to the WDB, local data indicates that One Stop customers served who obtained jobs did not get middle-wage jobs--and that those most likely to obtain jobs were those who had recent connection to a job. Therefore, it is important to ensure that older workers and long-term unemployed get access to workforce services and training to help them obtain employment with opportunities for wage growth.

4. Outreach and Marketing

The Workforce Services Navigator will work with the AEBG Consortium and WDB partners to reach our target population. Partners include but are not limited to: Employment Development Department; Santa Barbara Public Library System; Housing Authority; Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). They will also outreach and market to older workers at senior centers, places of worship, or other places where older individuals frequent and work to engage Community Based Organizations serving older residents and the long-term unemployed.

The Business Services Consultant will conduct employer outreach and education to inform employers about available resources to accommodate older workers as well as information campaigns designed to highlight the benefits of employing older workers. They will also assist with job development activities including identifying appropriate job opportunities, providing referrals to open job orders, and training, as appropriate, for older workers and long-term unemployed.

5. Alignment

This is a new program area, and aligns with the mission of the Consortium's Vision, Mission and Goals in that it serves adults who need additional services, that have not been targeted with the existing WIOA funding. This project assists the older population and long-term unemployed to more fully participate in the workforce system.

KRA is a data-driven organization and uses an integrated service delivery model to bring together strategic partners, in order to maximize the support we can provide program participants. This approach directly aligns with the Consortium's Vision to use data-driven decision-making and an inclusive, collaborative and coordinated approach, improve or grow existing programs, and design new programs to meet the proven needs of adults in our region. Progress reports will be submitted to the WDB Executive Director, and AEBG Consortium, on a monthly basis--to include: enrollments, training, skill certificates, and job placement.

6. Activity Chart

I certify that the Activity Chart has been completed and emailed to sbaebg@gmail.com

Total Budget Requested

\$45,000

1000/2000/3000

\$45,000

1000/2000/3000 Detail

For Staff Salaries

4000

0

4000 Detail

not applicable

5000

0

5000 Detail

not applicable

Current Number of Students Served

not applicable

Target Number of New Students Served for 2016-17

40

Do you currently receive NON-AEBG funding that supports the proposed activity? If yes, please describe how additional funding expands or supports that activity.

not applicable

What is your sustainability plan for this activity when funding is no longer available?

KRA will work with the Consortium and the WDB to coordinate the leveraging of resources from various partners to serve older workers and long term unemployed. The Consortium works closely with the Workforce Development Board (WDB) to achieve regional alignment and integration with existing programs and we will support these efforts through the One-Stop Center. Once this alignment is realized, we expect to see a better understanding of how to better integrate existing resources and program that leads to higher participation by these groups in activities funded by WIOA and other workforce partners. In addition, we anticipate that a long-term outcome of the investment in a business services consultant to outreach and market the program to businesses will result in greater acceptance among employers to hire older workers and long-term unemployed.