

Request for Proposal
Cuyahoga County Workforce Funders Group Strategic Plan
Winter 2023/2024

Request for Proposals

The Cuyahoga County Workforce Funders Group (WFG), a public/private/philanthropic partnership of 10+ funders focused on working in Cuyahoga County, is seeking a strategic planning consultant to work with the WFG on building its next three-year strategic framework.

The consultant will work with WFG members, stakeholders, and others (to be identified), as well as working with a body of available data, to determine the objectives/goals, desired impacts, primary priorities, and structure for the next three years. The outcome will be a strategic framework which enables the WFG to determine how to best meet its impact goals through both strategic/proactive and reactive/opportunistic actions in the workforce space.

Background

The current three-year strategic plan framework is included in Appendix and is in place for years 2022-2024. This plan was a refresh of the past plan, without a significant change in strategy; at the time, the WFG's desire, in summary, was to continue with the goals/objectives in place, as well as the desired impacts, and to "stick with the investments we've already made and continue to support their success" and to start to learn about new areas of need, workforce initiatives, and new options.

Now is a particularly important time for a new, multi-year (2025-2027) strategy for the Workforce Funders Group.

- The context in which we are operating has evolved significantly since 2018, when the initial strategies of the WFG (with a focus on sector partnerships, in three particular industries) were identified. We have data on how the existing initiatives are performing, and we have new systemic needs in our community.
- While the organizations have stayed the same, the members representing many of the organizations within the WFG have changed. They may have different priorities as leaders in their organizations. Some members may want to leave, and/or new members may want to join. We may also think differently about what types of organizations participate in some or all of the work, depending on priorities (grantmaking vs. advocacy for example.)
- The local Workforce Development Board is transforming from a governmental entity to a non-profit entity in mid-2024, adding another asset to our community from both a fiscal sponsor and an execution perspective (and maybe others.)

Strategic Plan Scope

As a philanthropic collaborative, the WFG's strategic planning needs are somewhat different than a traditional non-profit. The WFG catalyzes change through funding, advocacy,

communications, individual actions, and perhaps other actions. Because it does not implement initiatives with job seekers or employers directly (etc), it is removed from direct interaction with job seekers, employers, and some other stakeholders in the ecosystem. It largely relies on non-profit organizations to make the changes it seeks.

The consultant or team should propose a process which enables the following actions and outcomes:

- 1) Leverage and synthesize key points from current (largely existing) data and analysis regarding workforce supply and demand and factors within the labor market to ground the group's thinking and planning process in current economic context (supplementing only where necessary; data would largely be provided).
- 2) A scan of learnings from other markets, selected for their relevance to our work, to be shared with us. In particular, we'd be interested in a review of innovative workforce systems change initiatives and workforce funding collaborative trends in communities in which there is both a non-profit workforce board and a funder collaborative..)
- 3) Review of the perspectives of current members as well as a select group of other stakeholders regarding the WFG. (This would likely occur through personal interviews and could also include other methodologies for collecting opinions and feedback; other stakeholder names would be provided)
- 4) Updated mission/vision and goals, and updated role (particularly relative to other organizations including the Workforce Board)
- 5) Updated desired impacts/outcomes
- 6) Updated strategic priorities (without getting into specific individual initiatives we should or shouldn't support; we are seeking a strategic framework which enables us to make decisions as we have either proactive or reactive opportunities to consider)
- 7) Updated structure: Do we have the right fiscal sponsor, staffing, and governance structure? Should this continue to be an independent group?

Some of the most important questions/topics which should be considered in this context (a non-exhaustive list):

- Does this group still see value in working together to advance workforce systems change? Does this group still see value in a funder collaborative (or a funder+ collaborative) that is able to tackle workforce systems issues which are best addressed by the involvement of a collaboration (vs. individual funders?)
- What is our commitment to advancing racial equity through our work? Are we more, the same, or less committed to these outcomes?
- Are we principally focused on the needs of people impacted by poverty ("workforce" initiatives), or do we want to take a broader approach which enables us to address all

the talent needs in our community (which includes “workforce” as well as addressing the needs of employers for people with a B.S/B.A. or higher)?

- As the Workforce Development Board moves to a non-profit, what do you see as the benefit of this action to the WFG itself? To the work the WFG seeks to catalyze? What is the role of the WFG going forward given the Workforce Development Board's transition and its changing roles over the time period of the plan?

Strategic planning should kick off in Q1 2024 and should be completed by the end of summer 2024 at the latest. A more detailed timeline should be developed (after a consultant is selected) which will include milestones of progress throughout the process, including milestones which enable WFG members to make decisions as we go and for progress in the plan to be visible regularly through the ~6 month process. It is possible that some decisions may include a change in the direction, status or timing of the plan.

The Workforce Development Board is also undergoing a strategic plan during this time, and there are 4 individuals involved with both strategic plans (members of the WFG and the Workforce Development Board). An expectation of this consultant's workplan is to also work with the consultant leading that plan so there is clarity on differentiated roles and other points of alignment and complimentary work, as the work for both progresses.

Consultant Profile

The WFG is seeking a consultant or team of consultants with these characteristics, skills, and experiences:

- Core competency in strategic planning
- Significant experience in workforce development, particularly in communities outside of greater Cleveland. Particular understanding of workforce systems – how they operate, how funders interface with them, the characteristics of those which are most successful, and understanding of how those systems improve – is especially relevant.
- Ability to access and direct data analysis and synthesize insights from data
- Proven ability to manage, facilitate and lead collaboratives towards complex decisions
- A commitment to racial and gender equity and inclusion as a central framework for workforce development strategies, and experience in applying this lens and in driving actions which advance racial and gender equity and inclusion
- Energetic and inspirational facilitation approach

The WFG would like a consultant who is willing not just to facilitate but also to encourage and compel the collaborative forward, leaning in to develop a bold plan which is the next phase of this work, as informed by other highly productive workforce systems and funding collaboratives. (This desire for someone willing to push thinking and encourage is both a facilitation style and an approach relative to bringing expertise to the group.)

It would also be helpful (but not required) for the consultant to have

- knowledge of workforce best practices and innovations in nonprofit and for-profit job training models.
- Personal lived experience with some aspect of the workforce system

Supports available to the Consultant during the Project Duration

- A small group to aid in Strategic Planning process preparation and provide feedback.
- Support on scheduling group discussions
- Introductions to additional key stakeholders for interviews
- Wide range of existing labor market data/analysis

Proposal Process

Interested consultants, consulting teams/collaborations, or organizations should submit proposals which include:

- A description of the planned strategy, including the philosophy and guiding principles which undergird the consultant's approach to strategic planning
- A general proposed workplan
- Summary of qualifications to do this work, with particular focus on understanding of workforce systems across the U.S. and examples of involvement or rationale for why the consultant understands these systems. Examples of work or work summaries may be submitted as appendix materials if desired, but this is not required
- A proposed fee and fee schedule (e.g. hourly, monthly rate, etc).

The WFG is respectful of the time of candidates and organizations in responding to RFPs. As such, any candidate who is interested to learn more may have a discussion (up to 30 min) with 1-3 members (based on schedules) of the WFG prior to Feb. 10. This is not required but is offered to ensure candidates who go to the effort of submitting a proposal to have a chance to ask questions. To arrange a phone call, please email Cathy Belk at cbelk@deaconessfdn.org. Please call her at (216) 407-0408 only if you haven't received a response back within 48 hours.

Proposals are due by February 16 and will be reviewed by a small group of the WFG. The WFG may wish to talk further about your proposal and if that is the case, those discussions will happen the week of March 4. (If you are not available for much or all of that week, please indicate that in your proposal so other arrangements can be made if necessary.) A final decision is expected to be made by March 15 with commencement of the work to start shortly thereafter.

If you have any questions, please email Cathy Belk at cbelk@deaconessfdn.org.

Materials

Included in the Appendix are:

- Overview of the WFG, its members, and its history
- The current strategic plan as well as the framework we use for the initiatives of the collaborative
- Current summary of performance (2022 goals and 2022 performance)
- Data dashboard summary (full data dashboard will be made available)

Appendix

1) Background on the Workforce Funders Group and its Activities

The Cuyahoga County Workforce Funders Group (“WFG”) is a collaboration of public and private workforce development funders including the City of Cleveland, Cleveland Foundation, Cuyahoga County, Deaconess Foundation, Fund for our Economic Future, Huntington Bank, The George Gund Foundation, Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board, TeamNEO, and United Way of Greater Cleveland, with others interested in joining. The geographic focus of the WFG is Cuyahoga County.

The WFG formed out of initial discussions facilitated by County leadership in 2015. Since that time, the group has coalesced around a desire to improve and transform **workforce development systems in the County, with a particular focus on improving outcomes for Black and Latinx workers. The focus on systems change is core to the mission of the group, as this is tied to why the group is a collective group.** Programmatic change can be accomplished through funders individually, but changing systems – in which many stakeholders with different roles (such as employers in a current segment) will meaningfully change their behavior and actions to change outcomes long-term – is too hard for any one player on its own, including any one foundation.

The WFG uses a shared investment fund and other levers to catalyze this evolution, including 1) shared learning and visibility of initiatives to its individual funders, with the intention of action outside of the group, and 2) advocacy at all levels, from writing support letters to meeting with public officials.

The first area of focus of the WFG was to create sector partnerships in Northeast Ohio. Sector partnerships are a model of workforce development which are employer-led and require an intermediary organization to translate employer worker/talent needs into direction for talent developers (typically non-profits) and successful initiatives. The WFG launched three sector partnerships, the first in manufacturing (in December 2018), the second in healthcare (in August 2020), and the third in IT (in October 2020).

These sector partnerships have raised \$15M beyond the ~\$5M provided or committed to them by the WFG, and the WFG continues to be an active grantmaking partner and strategic supporter of these partnerships; the WFG has small groups of members who actively understand and support the work and needs of these partnerships, and champion those with the full WFG. In addition, for the manufacturing sector partnership, the WFG plays a strategic assessment role for the County and its \$5M ARPA investment.

In the last two years, the WFG has added a significant number of other initiatives to its plate, all focused on systems change and supporting the desires and needs of our community and its partners. Other initiatives have focused on continued interventions at the sector level (including hospitality and early childhood education workforce) or with other lenses in place (such as an investment in the Fund for Workforce Equity and supporting the Social Determinants of Work). The WFG has not created other sector partnerships as it has continued to learn about many different models for successful workforce development and seeks to change systems with whatever models are most effective and pragmatic for the challenge we seek to address.

The WFG meets approximately once a month. These meetings are attended by all the members of the WFG (listed above) as well as any funders who do not contribute to the pooled fund but align themselves with the WFG strategy through project support of an existing initiative. During these regular meetings, the WFG discusses and accomplishes the activities mentioned earlier, based on agendas managed and determined by the Chair and Vice Chair, together with a /consultant.

As with other boards, the majority of the work occurs via small groups (like board committees.) Members of the WFG meet in their small groups as needed to accomplish the work. For the strategic planning process, a small group would engage with the consultant to aid in preparation and to support feedback.

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Cuyahoga County Workforce Funders Group

2022-24 Strategic Direction

CONTEXT

Much has changed in the region (and the world) since the launch of the Cuyahoga County Workforce Funders Group in 2015. Evolving civic, political, and business leadership; the stark impact of the coronavirus pandemic; and social uprisings fueled by racial injustice have pushed the CCWFG to revisit its strategies. Thus, the goal of this strategic refresh is to ensure this current table of public and civic sector funders are aligned around a direction that enhances our collective ability to respond to critical issues impacting Greater Cleveland's workforce system.

OUR NORTH STAR

We continue to strive for a workforce system that centers diversity, equity and inclusion. We are committed to investing deeply in proven strategies and scaling them for greater impact. We aspire to elevate key learnings and successes from our collective effort to push for policy and funding reforms that create greater access to opportunity for diverse talent, robust business growth, and a competitive region.



MISSION

The CCWFG leverages the individual and collective influence, investments, and insights of its members to drive system change and equitable outcomes in workforce development.¹



VISION

We envision a highly skilled, valued, and talented workforce in Cuyahoga County that fuels business growth and competitiveness, vibrant communities and thriving families.



VALUES

Collaboration
Learning
Equity
Inclusion
Excellence
Transparency
Accountability

¹ Workforce development is the coordination of public and private sector policies and programs that strengthen family-sustaining career paths, enhance training/supports that help adults and youth connect to, advance and thrive in careers (with particular focus on two years of training or less) and actively support employers to source and retain workers they need to compete and grow, to meet needs for today and in the future. Workforce development not only targets an individual's or employer's skills needs, it also addresses structural inequities and barriers that block access and advancement in family-sustaining careers, such as from employer hiring practices, racial bias or transportation access.

OUR DESIRED COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- **Closing the talent gap (unfilled positions)** in Northeast Ohio's in-demand industries to ensure businesses have the talent they need to grow and prosper.
- **Increasing connection to family-sustaining jobs and career opportunities** for workers, especially for those who face barriers to sustained, quality employment.
- **Closing the racial income and employment gap** faced by Black and Latinx workers in Cuyahoga County by addressing employer practices and policies that impact workforce diversity, racial equity and inclusion.
- **Greater coordination** among workforce funders demonstrated by shared goals and strategic, aligned and coordinated investments in Cuyahoga County's workforce system to drive long-term structural improvements.

CORE STRATEGIES

Strategies	Key Actions
<i>Sustain and scale impact of sector partnerships to address critical talent gaps in key industries.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectively invest in the intermediary capacity of the healthcare, manufacturing and information technology sector partnerships. • Consider and support innovative efforts that can improve and/or accelerate the current sector partnership strategies, especially those ideas that can bolster multiple sector partnerships through a single investment. • Support and elevate shared learnings and best practices from the sector partnerships to reform workforce practices (policy, programming and funding).
<i>Foster shared, active learning among CCWFG members to unlock the collective and individual actions members can take to drive workforce systems change.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate, endorse and champion local and national workforce innovations and practices that are ripe for collective and/or individual action (including investment). • Foster shared understanding and alignment around relevant outcomes, research, public policy and workforce practices that broadly impact access to economic mobility and a strong labor market in Cuyahoga County, especially by race/ethnicity.
<i>Leverage the many roles of the CCWFG (advocate, thought leader, convenor) to transform Cuyahoga County's workforce development system in alignment with our mission, vision and values.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop / operationalize the framework, based in this strategy, that guides when the CCWFG would act (invest, advocate, convene) on an issue beyond the existing sector partnerships. • Develop / execute a narrative strategy to proactively elevate core issues, learnings, successes and perspectives from our learnings. • Assess outcomes and learnings over the next phase to understand the impact of our collective investment, including individual funder actions influenced by the CCWFG's strategy.

PROPOSED BUDGET 2022-24

CCWFG's pooled funds will be managed flexibly and nimbly to advance this three-year strategy. The following represents a starting point proposed budget, which will be reviewed and revised regularly as appropriate.

Strategies	Estimated Budget	Notes on Direction of Allocations, To Revise
STRATEGY 1: Sustain and scale impact of sector partnerships to address critical talent gaps in key industries	\$2,750,000 (inclusive of \$350,00 in directed support for Hospitality)	<p>Roughly estimated with the following components; expected to be revised as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediary capacity: 1,800,000 (based on intermediary need and WFG review) • Project specific acceleration grants: \$600,000 (based on need and WFG review) • Hospitality workforce innovation: \$350,000 (directed support from the County)
STRATEGY 2: Foster shared, active learning among CCWFG members to unlock the collective and individual actions members can take to drive workforce systems change.	\$60,000 - \$180,000	National best practices, policy analysis and research support as needed, complementing existing system research and CCWFG facilitator capacity
STRATEGY 3: Leverage the many roles of the CCWFG (advocate, thought leader, convenor) to transform Cuyahoga County's workforce development system in alignment with our mission, vision and values.	\$25,000 - \$50,000	Narrative building and public policy support, complementing existing system policy support and CCWFG facilitator capacity
Supportive Capacity	\$540,000	<p>Facilitation support: \$450,000 (\$150,000 per year)</p> <p>Communication support: \$90,000 (\$30,000 per year)</p>
Total	\$3,375,000 - \$3,520,000	

CCWFG's Pipeline of Work (2024 - Working)

Sector Partnerships and Sector Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality 		Potential Action in Other Sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Jobs • IT (another strategy) • Built Environment • Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce • Aerospace (Aerozone) • Other... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing (Scaling) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Connect Manufacturing Healthcare (Hospitality) • Early Childhood Education • Long term care
Other Systems Change Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BR&E & Intelligence Hub Connection w WF • Future of Work • Needs for federal grant writing support/match 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio Means Jobs Transition to 501c3 • Social Determinants of Work Initiative (UWGC) • Strengthening Workplaces (FFEF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening workforce data tracking & evaluation • Opportunity for policy agenda, strategy & support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Cleveland Career Consortium • STEM+ Internships 	
Track Topics/ Initiatives	Connect, Inform & Support Integration of WFG Member-Led Efforts	Actively Learn to Identify Individual or Collective Actions	Advocate and Provide Strategic Assessment/Support	Commit Resources (Financial & Leadership)

Increasing Engagement (from left to right)

Cuyahoga County
Workforce Funders Group

Goals for 2022 - 2024

Workers hired for well-paying, in-demand career paths	2,700
Workers who are Black or Latinx	>50%
Employers engaged	180
Employers implementing policy and practice changes to improve jobs and reduce racial inequities	85

Key Phase II Outcomes

Workforce Funders Group

~1,200 workers connected with in-demand careers in Phase II so far (2022-H1 2023), up from ~500 career connections in all of Phase I (2019-2021)

- ~570 workers participated in training (entry or incumbent), up from ~150 in Phase I
- 72% workers placed identified as Black, 1% Latino/a/x, 37% female (where data is available) in Phase II to date

100 employers have been engaged, up from 79 in Phase I

- Hiring and/or making hiring/workplace policy/practice changes, e.g. improving reentry hiring policy, removing high school graduation requirements for entry level roles

\$25M+ in leveraged funding for future outcomes & additional systems changes, including:

- Built environment
- Scaling Manufacturing
- Healthcare (Nursing)
- Diversity in workforce development leadership pipeline

Deaconess Foundation Cuyahoga County Dashboard: Fall 2023 Update						
Occupation Demand Unique (Job Postings 2021)	Total Demand 2021	Entry Level Demand 2021	Cuyahoga Credentialing (2021)	% Change Credentialing 2019-2021	Update: 2/1/2023	
All Jobs	172,073	60,460	17,498	0%		
I.T.	10,436	3,938	512	1%		
Manufacturing	15,064	5,809	485	1%		
Healthcare	16,273	7,407	4,588	11%		
Adjacent Cleveland Innovation Project Occupations (2020)	41,415	16,604	8,158	TBD (Definition Updates)		
Occupation Wages - All Sectors 2022, Individual Sustaining Wage = \$15.50	Total Employment	% of Total	% Change 2020 - 2021	Update: 2/1/2023		
Below Family Sustaining	147,768	20%	n/a			
At Family Sustaining	57,792	8%	n/a			
Above Family Sustaining	522,740	72%	n/a			
Total	728,300	100%				
Occupation Wages - All Sectors 2022, Family Sustaining Wage = \$25.50	Total Employment	% of Total	% Change 2020 - 2021	Update: 2/1/2023		
Below Family Sustaining	436,632	60%	n/a			
At Family Sustaining	36,707	5%	n/a			
Above Family Sustaining	254,961	35%	n/a			
Total	728,300	100%				
Occupation Wages by In-Demand Sector 2022	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	
I.T.	\$23.88	\$30.09	\$43.76	\$52.43	\$65.59	
Manufacturing	\$11.66	\$14.36	\$20.22	\$24.37	\$30.73	
Healthcare	\$15.45	\$19.23	\$28.44	\$31.02	\$44.74	
All Sectors	\$14.48	\$18.42	\$28.48	\$34.32	\$46.86	
Automation Potential (2022): Next Five Years		% Change 2022	Update: 2/1/2023			
Low Risk % of Jobs	367,462	Methodology Change				
Medium Risk % of Jobs	177,983					
High Risk % of Jobs	170,301					
Unemployment Rates (2021, Annual) *NOTE - Curently through Q3 2022	2021	2022	% Change	Updtae 2/1/2023		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5%	9%	4%			
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	9%	12%	4%			
Utilities	2%	3%	1%			
Construction	17%	28%	11%			
Manufacturing	9%	7%	-2%			
Wholesale Trade	5%	5%	0%			
Retail Trade	2%	2%	0%			
Transportation and Warehousing	5%	7%	1%			
Information	4%	5%	1%			
Finance and Insurance	3%	5%	1%			
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5%	6%	1%			
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5%	5%	1%			
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3%	3%	0%			
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	10%	11%	1%			
Educational Services	6%	5%	-1%			
Health Care and Social Assistance	3%	3%	0%			
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5%	5%	0%			
Accommodation and Food Services	3%	3%	-1%			
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3%	2%	0%			
Total	5%	5%	0%			
Total Employment		% Change from proceeding period	Updtae 2/1/2023			
2010	710,054		Feb-23			
2015	751,719	6%				
2020	719,573	-4%				
2022	728,300	1%				
Population		% Change	Updtae 2/1/2023			
2010	1,278,113		Feb-23			
2015	1,259,109	-1%				
2022	1,265,583	1%				
Gross Domestic Product (Nominal, millions \$)		% Change	Update: Fall 2023			
2010	\$72,757					
2015	\$87,312	20%				
2020	\$94,683	8%				
2022	\$108,584	15%				
Total Labor Force 2022		% Change	Updtae 2/1/2023			
2010	586,900					
2015	577,400	-2%				
2019	626,000	8%				
2022	601,200	-4%	**NOTE - 2019 Pre-Pandemic Labor Force Size Of 626,000			
Turnover Rate:	2021	2022	Difference	Updated Fall 2023		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	121%	99%	(21%)			
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	37%	31%	(6%)			
Utilities	23%	18%	(5%)			
Construction	82%	75%	(7%)			
Manufacturing	34%	39%	5%			
Wholesale Trade	37%	40%	3%			
Retail Trade	84%	90%	6%			
Transportation and Warehousing	93%	95%	2%			
Information	42%	40%	(2%)			
Finance and Insurance	25%	33%	7%			
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	54%	54%	(0%)			
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	44%	43%	(1%)			
Management of Companies and Enterprises	30%	35%	5%			
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	213%	231%	18%			
Educational Services	52%	53%	1%			
Health Care and Social Assistance	50%	55%	6%			
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	122%	104%	(19%)			
Accommodation and Food Services	157%	144%	(13%)			
Other Services (except Public Administration)	67%	61%	(6%)			
Total	68%	58%	(10%)			